Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought

FROM PHILIP THE CHANCELLOR (CA. 1225) TO FRANCISCO SUÁREZ

BY

JAN A. AERTSEN

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PREFACE

The present work represents the completion of a research project that has engaged me intensively throughout my scholarly life. Its origins reach back to my inaugural address on the occasion of taking up the Chair of Medieval Philosophy at the Free University of Amsterdam (1984). At the end of this lecture, *Medieval Reflections on Truth, 'Adaequatio rei et intellectus'*, I concluded that the idea of the transcendentality of truth underlies these reflections and announced that the medieval doctrine of the transcendentals "will be the subject of my research over the coming years".

This programmatic statement, typical of an ambitious new professor, turned out to be a fortunate choice. The choice had been motivated by a twofold interest. Historically, the doctrine of the transcendentals is an innovative contribution of the Middle Ages to the history of philosophy; the origin of transcendental thought is not to be sought in modern philosophy but is medieval. Systematically, the transcendental terms "being", "one", "true" and "good" concern what is first in a cognitive respect and what is fundamental; they express "basic" words of philosophy.

The project resulted in a large number of studies, including the monograph *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals. The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (1996). In the Introduction, I advanced the provocative thesis of an intrinsic connection between medieval philosophy and transcendental thought, already suggested by the main title of the book. My argument was that the theory of the transcendentals is essential for insight into the properly *philosophical* dimension of medieval thought, which is often developed in a theological context; medieval philosophy can be regarded as a way of transcendental thought. The thesis provoked critical comments and questions: does it not presuppose an "essentialist" conception of medieval philosophy and ignore its real diversity? In my view, the critique was based on a misunderstanding, which could only be removed by providing a complete history of the doctrine of the transcendentals that shows the multiplicity of transcendental thought in the Middle Ages.

In 2003, on the occasion of my retirement as Director of the Thomas Institute at the University of Cologne, thirty-five colleagues, friends and

students offered me an impressive Festschrift with the title *Die Logik des Transzendentalen*. The editor of the volume expressed the hope (p. XXI) that the various contributions would stimulate the realisation of the planned history of the doctrine of the transcendentals in a not too remote future. The Festschrift was indeed both a tribute and a stimulus.

I am delighted to be able now to present that history, but its publication would not have been possible without the precious help of two former collaborators in Cologne who became friends. I am very grateful to them for their encouragement, when a grave disease manifested itself in the spring of 2010. The present Director of the Thomas Institute, Prof. Dr. Andreas Speer, offered me the valuable support of the Institute in the publication of the book; Prof. Dr. Wouter Goris (Free University, Amsterdam) played a central role in its final preparation. My former assistant Prof. Dr. Martin Pickavé (University of Toronto) sent me helpful comments on some sections of the book. I would also like to thank Dr. Sabine Folger-Fonfara, who assisted me in various ways, Stephan Reigh and Tatjana Schmidt, who composed the indices, and especially Dr. Maxime Mauriège, who not only finalized the footnotes and bibliography but also took responsibility for reading the proofs.

Driebergen (Netherlands), August 2011 Jan Aertsen

INTRODUCTION

A milestone in the history of Western metaphysics was the publication of the *Disputationes metaphysicae* by the Spanish Jesuit Francisco Suárez at the end of the sixteenth century (1597). The work enjoyed astonishing success—in the decades after its publication it was printed seventeen times—and had a huge impact on the study of philosophy at both Catholic and Protestant universities throughout Europe. The *Disputationes metaphysicae* have been called "the first systematic account" of metaphysics in the Latin world. The designation "first" is debatable; in the course of our study, this claim will prove to be historically incorrect. But the systematic objective of Suárez's project is undeniable and his *Disputations* are the most comprehensive account of metaphysics ever composed.[1] In the introductory "Reason for and Outline of the Entire Work", Suárez expresses his systematic intention. He wants to deal with the entire domain of this science in a more convenient manner than by following the text of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Since the genre of a commentary allows only an occasional treatment of questions, the author thinks it more useful to observe the systematic *ordo doctrinae*.[2]

Suárez's work consists of 54 Disputations, which he divides into two parts to which the two tomes of the *Disputationes* correspond. In the first Disputation, which deals with "the nature of First Philosophy or metaphysics", he examines what the subject/object of this science is and concludes that it is "being insofar as it is real being" (*ens inquantum ens reale*). He next discusses the common *ratio* of being and its

[1] M. Grabmann, "Die Disputationes Metaphysicae des Franz Suarez in ihrer methodischen Eigenart und Fortwirkung", in: Id., *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben. Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Scholastik und Mystik*, Vol. 1, Munich 1926, pp. 524–560, especially p. 538. The text of the *Disputationes metaphysicae* is to be found in Suárez's *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXV and XXVI (ed. C. Berton, Paris 1866).

[2] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, "Ratio et discursus totius operis" (this text precedes the numbered pages of the first volume of the *Disputations*): "Et quoniam judicavi semper, magnam ad res intelligendas ac penetrandas, in eis convenienti methodo inquirendis et judicandis, vim positam esse, quam observare vix (…) possem, si, expositorum more, quaestiones omnes, prout obiter et veluti casu circa textum Philosophi occurrunt, pertractarem, idcirco expeditius et utilius fore censui, servato doctrinae ordine, ea omnia inquirere".

properties unity, truth and goodness, which Suárez calls *transcendentia* or *transcendentalia* (Disp. II–XI), as well as the causes of being in general (Disp. XII–XXVII). The second part deals with more determinate concepts of being and starts with the division of being into infinite and finite being (Disp. XXVIII). Suárez considers infinite being, that is, God (Disp. XXIX–XXX), and then goes on with an extensive analysis of the categories, into which finite being can be divided, i.e. substance (Disp. XXXIII–XXXVI) and the accidents (Disp. XXXVII–LIII). The last Disputation LIV is a kind of appendix: it deals with being of reason (*ens rationis*), which in fact falls outside the scope of metaphysics.[3]

From the scheme of the work it appears that the *Disputationes metaphysicae* are concerned with four doctrinal foci: a doctrine of the transcendental determinations that surpass the categories, a doctrine of the causes, a doctrine of the divine and a doctrine of the categories. A comparison of the contents of the *Disputationes* with the main teachings in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* shows that the essential innovation lies in the first theme. Aristotle's First Philosophy presents an aitiology (Book I), a theology (Book XII) and an ousiology (Book VII), but not a systematic doctrine of the transcendentals. This theory, however, is determinative for Suárez's understanding of metaphysics and the foundation of the *Disputationes*—this discipline explicates the *transcendentales rationes* of being, which are the condition of any scientific treatment.[4] Apparently Aristotle's concept of metaphysics has been transformed, insofar as First Philosophy has received a transcendental character.

The intriguing question is when, why and how this transformation has taken place. Suárez's writing does not give an immediate answer, but provides some clues, as another distinctive feature of the *Disputationes metaphysicae* is that they do not see the systematic approach and the historical method as opposites, but as complementary. The *Disputations* combine the rationality of a systematic account with the historical probing of a problem. Each Disputation starts with an inquiry into the opinions of the philosophers and their *fundamenta*.

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[3] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, Index (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, pp. LXVII–LXXIII).

[4] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, I, sect. 4, n. 13 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 29): "[Metaphysica] transcendentales rationes entis declarat, sine quarum cognitione vix potest in aliqua scientia quippiam exacte tractari".

In these discussions Suárez displays an amazing acquaintance with the Greek, Arabic and Latin commentators and with Scholastic views. In the judgment of no less a person than Etienne Gilson, Suárez "enjoys such a knowledge of medieval philosophy as to put to shame any modern historian of medieval thought. On each and every question, he seems to know everybody and everything".[5] The *Disputations* document that Suárez is not the originator of the doctrine of the transcendentals, but rather someone who completes it, and that he adopts the transcendental conception of metaphysics from a tradition that goes back to the Middle Ages. It is this medieval heritage that we want to examine and analyze in the present study.

Over the last decades, a number of investigations have contributed to our knowledge of the medieval doctrine of the transcendentals. They have provided insight into the historical and doctrinal background by analyzing specific aspects of the theory or by dealing with particular authors.[6] There exist, however, only two general surveys; both of them go back to the 1920s and must be regarded as obsolete.[7] Since the publication of these works the study of medieval philosophy has fundamentally changed due to a series of new critical editions: Avicenna latinus, Philip the Chancellor, Albert the Great, Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Dietrich of Freiberg, Meister Eckhart, Francis of Meyronnes, Francis of Marchia, Berthold of Moosburg, William of Ockham—and the enumeration is not exhaustive. These new texts have immediate relevance for our understanding of the doctrine of the transcendentals; the *Avicenna latinus*, for instance, reveals the Arab background of the doctrine, Philip the Chancellor's *Summa de bono* contains the first formulation of the theory and Francis of Meyronnes was the first medieval author to compose a systematic *Tractatus de transcendentibus*. The editions not only broadened our horizon, they also changed the landscape of medieval

[5] E. Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, Toronto [2]1952, p. 99.

[6] For the current state of research, cf. J. A. Aertsen, "The Medieval Doctrine of the Transcendentals. The Current State of Research", in: *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 33 (1991), pp. 130–147; and id., "The Medieval Doctrine of the Transcendentals. New Literature", in: *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 41 (1999), pp. 107–122.

[7] H. Knittermeyer, *Der Terminus 'transzendental' in seiner historischen Entwicklung bis zu Kant*, Marburg 1920. G. Schulemann, *Die Lehre von den Transzendentalien in der scholastischen Philosophie*, Leipzig 1929 (Forschungen zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Pädogogik, IV/2).

philosophy by revealing the originality of as yet unknown thinkers. A new comprehensive history of transcendental thought in the Middle Ages is therefore a desideratum.

The present study will fill this lacuna. It analyzes the formation of the doctrine of the transcendentals in the thirteenth century and its development in the later Middle Ages up to and including Suárez. Yet not every medieval statement or argument on this issue will find a place in this survey. What matters are the doctrinal turns and innovative positions. The older general studies did not pay sufficient attention to the diversity in the concept(s) of transcendentality, because they considered the doctrine in a too isolated manner as a self-contained topic. Our study intends to place this doctrine in a broader philosophical context by focusing on five elements that constitute, as it were, the coordinates of the structural analysis.

(i) "Transcendental systematics"

Point of departure are, of course, the various accounts of the transcendentals from Philip the Chancellor to Francis Suárez. What deserves attention—it is the first structural element of our study—are the ordering principles of these expositions, the "transcendental systematics" as it were, which mostly remains rather implicit. A plurality of transcendentals is presented, but this plurality asks for two problems. One problem concerns the order among these notions. The plurality of the transcendentals is an ordered multiplicity that presupposes a "first". In virtually all accounts a priority is attributed to "being" (*ens*); the other transcendentals "one", "true" and "good" are seen posterior to this notion. But what arguments are adduced for the priority of being? The second problem concerns the identity and difference between the transcendentals. The other terms add something to "being", but how is such an "addition" possible at the transcendental level?

It turns out that the relation between "being" and the other transcendentals is interpreted according to the predicative model of a "subject" and its "property" (*proprium*). The relation of the predicable *proprium* to a subject is marked by the features of identity and difference: it necessarily belongs to the subject and is "convertible" with it, but is outside the essence of the subject and really distinct from it. The importance of this model consists in the fact that it determines the structure of "science" (*scientia*). In the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle argues that the task of every science is to estab-

lish the "subject-genus" that underlies the conclusions of that science and to demonstrate the attributes *(passiones* or *propria*) that belong *per se* to the subject.[8] The reception of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* is a presupposition of the doctrine of the transcendentals, since the structure of science constitutes the framework of the doctrine, in which the basic notions "being", "one", "true" and "good" are interrelated in a systematic manner.

(ii) Transcendentality and metaphysics

The science whose structure is determinative for the doctrine of the transcendentals is metaphysics, more precisely, a new understanding of metaphysics. Crucial for the transformation of the Aristotelian conception of this science in the Middle Ages was the discussion on the question as to the "proper subject" (*subiectum proprium*) of metaphysics, which is the second structural moment in our study.[9] It became the "basic question" of this science and is the opening question in Suárez's *Disputationes metaphysicae*.

The increased systematic importance the medievals attributed to the notion of "subject", which plays a modest role in Aristotle's theory of science, appears from the first question in the commentary on the *Sentences* of Giles of Rome, one of the leading thinkers at the University of Paris during the last decades of the thirteenth century. In this question on the *subiectum* of a *scientia*, Giles argues that a science acquires five marks from its "subject": unity, distinction, dignity, order among the sciences and necessity.[10] The most fundamental feature is the first one; the proper "subject" of a science is that which constitutes its unity. Giles supports this claim by a reference to the authoritative

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[8] Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* I, c. 10, 76b 11–16. Cf. A. Corbini, *La teoria della scienza nel XIII secolo, Il commenti agli 'Analitici Secondi'*, Firenze 2006 (Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevii. Testi e Studi, 20), pp. 133–150.

[9] The classic study on this issue is A. Zimmermann, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik? Die Diskussion über den Gegenstand der Metaphysik im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert. Texte und Untersuchungen*, Leuven ²1998 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales. Bibliotheca, 1) [1st ed. Leiden-Köln 1965 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 8)].

[10] Giles of Rome, *In I librum Sententiarum*, prol., q. 1 (ed. Venice 1521 [reprinted in Frankfurt am Main 1968], fol. 2ra): "Utrum omne quod consideratur in scientia sit subiectum". The printed version contains the ordinate version of Giles' commentary on the first book (around 1271–1273). Cf. his *Quaestiones metaphysicales*, I, q. 6 (ed. Venice 1501 [reprinted in Frankfurt am Main 1966], fol. 3vb).

text in this respect, a passage in the *Posterior Analytics*, in which Aristotle maintains that the unity of a science is based on the unity of the subject according to its generic nature, the subject-genus or simply the subject, of which the parts and properties are considered in that science.[11]

What is new in the medieval reception of Aristotle is the application of the notion of "subject of science" to metaphysics. Its aim was to establish the structural unity of First Philosophy, which seemed to be ambiguous due to of Aristotle's divergent determinations of this science. The outcome of the discussion was an ontological conception of First Philosophy: its subject is being as being or being in general. This conception was the condition for the transformation of metaphysics to a "transcendental science", which is manifest in Suárez's *Disputationes metaphysicae*.

(iii) Transcendentals and the divine

From its beginning, the doctrine of the transcendentals has a theological aspect, which is the third structural element of our inquiry. Transcendental terms are also divine names. God is called "Being", "One", "True" and "Good". The importance of this connection appears from the fact that accounts of the singular transcendentals are frequently presented in the context of reflections on the divine attributes "unity", "truth" or "goodness".

The theological aspect of the doctrine is centered on the question of how the commonness of the transcendental terms is related to what is proper to God who transcends all things. The medievals raise and discuss the question within the science of metaphysics. The conclusion that "the proper subject" of metaphysics is not God, but being as being or *ens commune* does not imply that the divine is excluded from the consideration of First Philosophy. Medieval metaphysics thus has an onto-theological structure.

The concept of "onto-theology" was introduced by Martin Heidegger, who claimed that "the onto-theological constitution (*Verfassung*)" is the necessary structure of *all* metaphysics. Heidegger connects a harsh

[11] Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, I, c. 28, 87a 38 (transl. Gerardi, in: Aristoteles latinus, Vol. IV/1–4, ed. L. Minio-Paluello, Bruges – Paris 1968, p. 240): "et scientia una est in qua est subiectum unum".

criticism of the entire metaphysical tradition with this conclusion. The onto-theological structure denies the difference between being and beings, because God is introduced as the highest among the beings and at the same time as the explanation of being.[12] Yet the expression "onto-theology" is appropriate if it is taken as a descriptive term without the Heideggerian connotations. Not *all* metaphysics necessarily has this constitution, but most medieval conceptions of metaphysics have an onto-theological structure, insofar as they are at the same time ontology and theology. Their views, however, on the relation of the transcendental subject of metaphysics to God differ greatly.

(iv) Transcendentals and the problem of conceptual unity

Transcendental terms can be said of all things, but is their common predicability based on the conceptual unity of these notions?[13] This question, relevant to the possibility of a general science of being and a metaphysical doctrine of the transcendentals, is the fourth structural element of our study.

Thirteenth-century authors did not accept the range of possible answers to this question, its "topics" as it were, which was determined by the opening chapter of the *Categories*. In the first chapter, Aristotle briefly describes three different relationships between names, concepts and things: "homonyms" (Latin: *aequivoca*), "synonyms" (*univoca*)

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[12] Heidegger used this expression for the first time in the "Introduction" he later (1949) added to his inaugural lecture of 1929 "What is Metaphysics?" ("Einleitung zu 'Was ist Metaphysik?'", in: *Wegmarken*, Frankfurt am Main 1967, pp. 207–208). Cf. his lecture "Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik", in: *Identität und Differenz*, Pfullingen 1957, pp. 35–73. For the different meanings of this phrase in Heidegger's writings and the question whether the expression can be applied to the medieval forms of metaphysics, cf. O. Boulnois, "Heidegger, l'ontothéologie et les structures médiévales de la métaphysique", in: C. Esposito / P. Porro (eds.), *Heidegger ei medievali. Atti del colloquio intemazionale, Cassino, 10–13 maggio 2000*, Turnhout 2001 (Quaestio, 1), pp. 379–406.

[13] Cf. S. F. Brown, "Avicenna and the Unity of the Concept of Being. The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Gerard of Bologna and Peter Aureoli", in: *Franciscan Studies* 25 (1965), pp. 117–150. R. Schönberger, *Die Transformation des klassischen Seinsverständnisses. Studien zur Vorgeschichte des neuzeitlichen Seinsbegriffs im Mittelalter*, Berlin-New York 1986 (Quellen und Studien zur Philosophie, 21), pp. 122–240. S. Donati, "La discussione sull'unità del concetto di ente nella tradizione di commenti della 'Fisica': commenti parigini degli anni 1270–1315 ca.", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, Berlin – New York 2003 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 30), pp. 60–139.

and "paronyms" (*denominativa*). These designations were applied in later tradition to all three elements of the relationship, not only to things, as Aristotle did, but also to names and concepts. "Equivocals" are defined by Aristotle as "those things that have only a common name but a different concept (*ratio*) of the essence corresponding to that name". The example he gives is the term *zoôn* ('animal') that in Greek can be said both of a man and of what is painted. "Univocals" are said to be "those things that have both the name and the *ratio* corresponding to that name in common", for instance, 'animal' said of a man and an ox. "Denominatives" are called things that derive their name from some other name, but differ from it in termination. Thus 'grammarian' derives his name from the word 'grammar'.[14]

The case of "being" is not addressed in the *Categories*, but given that in his *Metaphysics* Aristotle denies that "being" is a genus, and univocity is the domain of the genera and species, "homonymy" seems to be its proper place: the same term is predicated of a plurality of things, but according to different concepts. The conclusion that "being" is an equivocal term was explicitly drawn by Porphyry in his "Introduction" (*Isagoge*) to Aristotle's *Categories* (see ch. 2.1).

Thirteenth-century thinkers proposed a new "topics" of the relationships between names, concepts and things. Aristotle's tripartite division in the *Categories* was replaced by another triadic scheme, in which, instead of the *denominativa*, the medieval "invention of analogy" constituted a third type besides univocity and equivocity.[15] What is predicated in analogical fashion is said of many things neither according to wholly diverse meanings nor according to one and the same *ratio* but according to an order of priority and posteriority.

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[14] Aristotle, *Categories*, c. 1, 1a 1–15. Boethius's Latin translation in: Aristoteles latinus, Vol. I/1–5: *Categoriae vel Praedicamenta* (ed. L. Minio-Paluello, Bruges – Paris 1961, p. 5).

[15] The expression "invention of analogy" has been suggested by J.-F. Courtine, *Inventio analogiae. Métaphysique et ontothéologie*, Paris 2005. For the metaphysical importance of the problem of analogy, cf. L. B. Puntel, *Analogie und Geschichtlichkeit*, Vol. I: *Philosophiegeschichtlich-kritischer Versuch über das Grundproblem der Metaphysik*, Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1969 (Philosophie in Einzeldarstellungen, 4). The literature on the medieval doctrine is vast; we mention A. de Libera, "Les sources gréco-arabes de la théorie médiévale de l'analogie de l'être", in: *Les Études philosophiques* 3–4 (1989), pp. 319–345. E. J. Asworth, "Analogy and Equivocation in Thirteenth-Century Logic: Aquinas in Context", in: *Mediaeval Studies* 54 (1992), pp. 94–135. J. Lonfat, "Archéologie de la notion d'analogie d'Aristote à saint Thomas d'Acquin", in: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 71 (2004), pp. 35–107.

This new type became the mark of transcendentality in the thirteenth century.

A typical feature of the medieval doctrine is that it teaches a *duplex analogia* of being.[16] The analogy is first applied to the categorial division of being into substance and the accidents. However, the primary interest concerns the application of the analogy to God and the creatures: "being" is primarily said of God and secondarily of the creature. The two modes of analogy are sometimes, under the influence of studies on Aquinas's conception of analogy, referred to as "categorical" and "transcendental" analogy.[17] The introduction of this terminology is unfortunate; it is true that the former analogy is concerned with the categorial diversity, but the condition of an analogical unity at this level is the transcendentality of being. Instead of the distinction between "categorical" and "transcendental", the designations "transcendental" and "theological" analogy are preferable. The twofold analogy has also occasionally been described, according to a suggestion by Albert the Great, as the opposition between "philosophical" and "theological" analogy.[18] This terminology could also be misleading, because "theological" has not to be understood here as opposed to "philosophical" but as a specification thereof: the application of the transcendental-analogical conception of unity to divine and creaturely being.

Fundamental criticism of the analogy model was voiced by John Duns Scotus at the beginning of the fourteenth century. He argues that the transcendental-analogical community of being is an insufficient basis for the science of metaphysics and claims the univocity of the concept of being.[19] His thesis marked a turn in the medieval theory of the transcendentals and changed the project of transcendental philosophy.

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[16] Cf. (Pseudo-Thomas Aquinas), *De natura generis*, c. 1, n. 476 (ed. R. M. Spiazzi, in: *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opuscula philosophica*, Turin – Rome, 1954, p. 177): "In ente autem sic accepto, duplex analogia reperitur".

[17] Cf. C. Fabro, *Participation et Causalité selon S. Thomas d'Aquin*, Louvain 1961, pp. 510–513. B. Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Louvain-Paris 1963, pp. 33–40.

[18] Cf. A. de Libera, *Albert le Grand et la philosophie*, Paris 1990, pp. 89–101.

[19] Cf. T. A. Barth, "Zum Problem der Eindeutigkeit. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis ihrer Entwicklung von Aristoteles über Porphyrius, Boethius, Thomas von Aquin nach Duns Scotus", in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 55 (1942), pp. 300–321.

(v) Transcendentals as the "firsts"

"Being", "one", "true" and "good" are the "firsts" (*prima*) in a cognitive respect, "the first intelligibles" or "the first conceptions of the intellect", which are the condition for all subsequent knowledge. This often neglected epistemological aspect of the doctrine of the transcendentals is the fifth structural element of our study.

In the thirteenth century a debate on what is first known began: is it being in general or the first being? An interesting development in this debate was the interpretation of what is first known in terms of the "first" or "proper object" of the intellect. The philosophical meaning of the term *obiectum* is another medieval "invention". "Object" appears for the first time as a philosophical expression in early thirteenth-century treatises on the soul and its powers.[20] The background to the term is the Aristotelian psychology of knowledge in *De anima*; the correlate of "object" is *potentia* ("power" or "potency") and *habitus*. The "objective turn" is perceptible in Thomas Aquinas who argues that what is first conceived by the intellect is "being" (*ens*), because something is knowable insofar as it is in act. From this he draws the conclusion that "being" is the *proprium obiectum* of the intellect and thus the *primum intelligibile*.[21] The "first" or "proper" object determines the unity and scope of a power, for it is the object under whose *ratio* the various material objects are referred to that power.

Medieval authors assert a fundamental correspondence between the first *object* of the intellect and the proper *subject* of metaphysics: both are concerned with being in general. The object answers to the ontological conception of the subject, is the condition for the possibility of metaphysics as science of being. A clear example of this "transcendental" agreement is to be found in Richard Conington, an English Franciscan, who was a contemporary of John Duns Scotus at Oxford.

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[20] L. Dewan, "'Obiectum': Notes on the Invention of a Word", in: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraires du Moyen Âge* 48 (1981), pp. 37–96. Cf. Th. Kobusch, "Objekt", in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. VI, Basel 1984, pp. 1026–1052.

[21] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. IV, Rome 1888, p. 58): "Illud ergo est prius secundum rationem, quod prius cadit in conceptione intellectus. Primo autem in conceptione intellectus cadit ens: quia secundum hoc unumquodque cognoscibile est quod est actu (…). Unde ens est proprium objectum intellectus: et sic est primum intelligibile, sicut sonus est primum audibile".

In his *Quodlibet* I, q. 9 (written before 1308), he discusses the question "Whether 'being' that is the *subiectum* of our metaphysics is the first adequate *obiectum* of the intellect?" and affirms their identity.[22]

The five structural elements we indicated are interrelated. Their connection will gradually become more evident in the course of our study, but it is already clear that the new conception of metaphysics is a connecting link. The science of metaphysics encloses the ontological and theological aspects of the transcendentals; the problem of the conceptual unity of being touches the possibility of a science of being; and the view of the transcendentals as the "first concepts" is the epistemological condition of such a science.

[22] Cf. W. Goris, *The Scattered Field, History of Metaphysics in the Postmetaphysical Era*, Leuven 2004 [Inaugural Address, Free University of Amsterdam], pp. 26–28.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONCEPT OF *TRANSCENDENS* IN MEDIEVAL THOUGHT: WHAT IS BEYOND AND WHAT IS COMMON

1.1 Introduction: *Transcendentalis* and *transcendens*

To begin with: What underlies the name 'transcendental' by which we refer to an original feature of medieval philosophy? What is the meaning of the term, central to our inquiry? In this chapter, we intend to clarify the vocabulary and the conceptual language of the medievals. Such a clarification turns out to be complex and presents many a pitfall to the historian because of the ambivalence of the terminology and the uncertainties, even paradoxes, which its genealogy is full of.

A first paradox: the object of our inquiry does not seem to exist, since there is no textual evidence for the occurrence of the term *transcendentalis* in the Middle Ages. When the term appears in medieval texts, it is due to the modern editors rather than their authors. One example may suffice. An anonymous thirteenth-century treatise, sometimes attributed to Bonaventure, was edited under the title "*Tractatus de transcendentalibus entis conditionibus*" (see ch. 4.3). The title, however, is a creation of the editor; the term *transcendentalis* does not appear anywhere in the treatise.[1] The medievals themselves always use the participle *transcendens* as adjective or substantive nouns, mostly in its neutral plural form *transcendentia*. What right then do students of medieval philosophy have to speak of a theory of the "transcendentals"? Is the title "Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought" not an improper attempt to construct a continuity between medieval

[1] D. Halcour (ed.), *Tractatus de transcendentalibus entis conditionibus*, in: *Franziskanische Studien* 41 (1959), pp. 41–106. Another example is the edition of the *Quaestiones in I Sententiarum* of the English Dominican William Crathorn (who taught in Oxford around 1330), in q. 11 (ed. F. Hoffmann, Münster 1988, p. 365, ll. 18–19), Crathorn states: "Primo dicam aliquid de istis terminis *transcendentalibus* [italics supplied]: ens, unum, bonum, verum, aliquid, etc.". But according to a notification of the editor, the manuscripts use an abbreviation, which should be read as *transcendentibus* in conformity with the passage later on in the same question (ed. Hoffmann, p. 377, ll. 23–26): "Et ita transcendens esset de se finitum et per consequens repugnaret enti infinito nec posset dici de seipso formaliter quod falsum est, quia omnia transcendentia dicunt perfectionem simpliciter et summe conveniunt".

thought and "modernity", because the term "transcendental" is generally associated with the way of thought inaugurated by Immanuel Kant?

Scholars have expressed a *caveat* with respect to the translation of *transcendens* by "transcendental". "There is such a wide gap between Kantian thought and Ancient and Medieval basic philosophical tenets that one should refrain from rendering *termini transcendentes* "transcendent*al* terms".[2] The warning assumes that the expression "transcendental" is an exclusively Kantian terminology, but this assumption is not correct.

Kant himself is aware that the notion of "transcendental philosophy" has a long tradition. In the second edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787), he added a section, in which he points to the "Transcendental Philosophy of the Ancients" and quotes the proposition, "so famous among the Schoolmen": "*quodlibet ens est unum, verum, bonum*". At the same time the section added manifests Kant's "Copernican revolution". While the Scholastics believed transcendentals to be the most general predicates of *things*, they are in fact "nothing but logical requirements and criteria of all *knowledge of* things" (Kant's italics).[3] Kant emphasizes the fundamental discontinuity with Scholastic thought, but the fact remains that it is an opposition to a "transcendental philosophy". It is historically and philosophically appropriate to consider the medieval doctrine as a distinctive form within the tradition of transcendental thought;[4] it is in fact the origin of transcendental philosophy.

This conclusion is corroborated by another fact. In the "Introduction" we noticed that in the sixteenth century Francisco Suárez, in his influential *Disputationes metaphysicae*, used the terms *transcendens* and *transcendentalis* as synonyms.[5] What is surprising is that the

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[2] L. M. de Rijk, "The Aristotelian Background of Medieval *transcendentia*: A Semantic Approach", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, Berlin – New York 2003 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 30), pp. 3–22, in particular p. 22.

[3] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B 112–113. Cf. H. Leisegang, "Über die Behandlung des scholastischen Satzes 'Quodlibet ens est unum, verum, bonum seu perfectum', und seine Bedeutung in Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft", in: *Kantstudien* 20 (1915), pp. 403–421.

[4] Cf. N. Hinske, "Verschiedenheit und Einheit der transzendentalen Philosophien", in: *Archiv für Philosophie* 8 (1958), pp. 317–329.

[5] Suárez uses, for instance, both expressions in the same sentence in *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, IV, sect. 9, n. 12 (ed. C. Berton, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXV, Paris 1866,

author, who usually is very precise in his terminology, did not feel the need to account for the synonymy; apparently, he did not introduce a novelty, but followed a current usage in Spanish Scholasticism. Therefore, Suárez cannot be regarded as the originator of the term *transcendentalis*, which was probably framed on analogy with *praedicamentalis*; its exact origin remains unknown.[6]

The emergence (and the acceptance) of *transcendentalis* as a synonym of *transcendens* could have been connected with the desire to remove an ambivalence of the latter term. The ambivalence of philosophical terms is not an uncommon phenomenon in the history of thought, but the peculiarity of the name *transcendens* consists in its standing for two radically different philosophical tendencies. It is this aspect that we have to consider first.

1.2 The ambivalence of the term *transcendens*: The *Declaratio difficilium terminorum* of Armand of Bellevue

The ambivalence of the term *transcendens* in the Middle Ages is clearly demonstrated by a fourteenth-century lexicon that is also highly interesting for the history of philosophy, the *Declaratio difficilium terminorum* of Armand of Bellevue (Armand de Belvézer). As he states in the introductory letter, Armand has composed this work for students in the Faculty of Theology, who sometimes had problems with terms of philosophical provenance. Probably he wrote the *Declaratio*, which enjoyed a considerable circulation, around 1326, when he was lector in the *studium* of the Dominicans in Montpellier.[7]

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p. 144b): "(…) unitas transcendentalis, quae est passio entis (…); ergo illa sola est unitas transcendens". Cf. R. Darge, *Suarez' transzendentale Seinsauslegung und die Metaphysiktradition*, Leiden-Boston 2004 (Studien Und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 80), pp. 53–59.

[6] B. Mojsisch, in the entry "Relation II: Spätantike, Mittelalter und Renaissance" of the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. VIII, Basel 1992, pp. 586–595, here p. 592, refers to the expression *respectus transcendentalis* in the commentary on *De anima* by the Renaissance philosopher Agostino Nifo (ca. 1470–1538).

[7] There is no critical edition of this work. We used the edition printed at Venice in 1586: "*Declaratio difficilium terminorum theologiae, philosophiae atque logicae*". Cf. J. Hamesse, "Lexiques et glossaires philosophiques inédits", in: id. (ed.), *Les manuscrits des lexiques et glossaires de l'antiquité tardive à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1996, pp. 453–480 (on Armand, pp. 472–473).

The "difficult terms" that are explained also include the term *transcendens*, which Armand expounds in the second treatise of the *Declaratio*, c. 274. This place hardly points to a special importance of the term, but that impression radically changes when one takes the general structure of the writing into account. The *Declaratio* is not an alphabetically ordered lexicon, but arranges the names on the basis of systematic considerations and principles.

Structure of the work

The *Declaratio* is divided into three treatises of different size. Treatise I (6 chapters) sets forth a number of suppositions or premises (*suppositiones* or *praeambula*) that are determinative for the order of the work. The second chapter states the fundamental premise that all concepts are reduced to (*reduci*) or resolved into (*resolvi*) the concept of "being" (*ens*), which is the *primum intelligibile*. The actual explanation of the terms follows in the voluminous second treatise (302 chapters). Treatise III (20 chapters) deals with the divine names.

Armand divides treatise II into two parts on the basis of a distinction that was current in the fourteenth century and that he had explained in treatise I, the distinction between names of the first intention and names of the second intention or logical concepts. As a consequence of the supposition that "being" is "the first intelligible", those names of the first intention are first dealt with, which signify a general mode of being, consequent to every being, and are called *transcendentia*. Next those names are treated that signify special modes of being, namely the *praedicamenta*.[8]

Treatise II consequently starts with an extensive account *De transcendentibus* (c. 1–28). It explains the meaning, sufficiency and difference of the six transcendental notions *ens, res, unum, aliquid, verum* and *bonum*.[9] Armand's approach makes clear that his *Declaratio* is

[8] Armand of Bellevue, *Declaratio*, II, prooem. (ed. Venice 1586, p. 6): "Nunc accedendum est ad secundum principale, uidelicet ad declarationem uocabulorum et nominum, quae communius in usu loquentium difficultatem faciunt in theologica facultate. Et primo de nominibus primae intentionis siue impositionis. Secundo de nominibus secundae impositionis siue intentionis. Quantum autem ad nomina primae intentionis: Primo dicendum est de illis nominibus, quae exprimunt modum entis generaliter consequentem omne ens, et addunt hunc modum siue exprimunt ad ens. Secundo de nominibus, quibus exprimuntur speciales modi essendi".

[9] *Ibid.*, "Tituli tractatus secundi": "De sufficientia sex transcendentium, numerus et differentia, et qualiter se habeant ad inuicem quae sunt ens, res, unum, aliquid, uerum et bonum. Capitulum I".

founded on a philosophical systematics, in which the *transcendentia* are the basic concepts. His exposition is strongly influenced, both in terms of the theory and its formulation, by Aquinas's account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1. From this work Armand adopts the opposition of the general and the special or categorial modes of being, the number of six transcendentals, their order and their derivation.

The explanation of the meaning of the term *transcendens* itself does not occur in this section; it only appears in the second part, which deals with the names of the second intention. That seems odd, but Armand's procedure is consistent, because one has to distinguish between first intentions, which possess the *ratio* of *transcendens*, and this *ratio* itself. He structures the second part similar to the way he organized the first part. Just as some names of the first intention surpass (*transcendunt*) every genus, so do some names of the second intention. Those second intentions are first dealt with that are common to the transcendentals and the ten genera, like, for instance, '*praedicabile*', then those intentions are dealt with that are only common to the ten genera, such as '*genus*' and '*species*'.[10] In his treatment of the first group of second intentions, Armand brings up the term *transcendens*.

Explanation of the term transcendens

Armand's starting-point is a general explanation of the name: *transcendens* means *trans omne ens* or *transiens omne ens*. This "transcending" occurs in a threefold manner (*tripliciter*). The first mode is based on the "nobility of being" (*nobilitas entitatis*); in this sense God is called *transcendens*, because he transcends every being by the "nobility of actuality" (*actualitas*). But this mode of speaking, Armand adds, is not the common use of the word.[11]

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[10] *Ibid.*, c. 274 (p. 319): "Quod sicut inter nomina primarum intentionum sunt quaedam, ut prius patuit, quae transcendunt et circumeunt omne genus (…), ita et in secundis intentionibus. Quaedam sunt communes omnibus transcendentibus et omnibus decem rerum generibus, sicut hoc quod dico 'praedicabile' et multa alia. Quaedam sunt solum communes decem generibus rerum, sicut hoc quod dico 'genus' et 'species' et multa alia".

[11] *Ibid.*: "De hoc autem nomine 'transcendens' sciendum, quod transcendens dicitur quasi trans omne ens, uel transiens omne ens, hoc autem contingit tripliciter. Primo entitate, et hoc modo Deus dicitur transcendens, quia nobilitate actualitatis transcendit omne ens, et sic non est communis usus uocabuli".

There is another mode of *transcendens*, which is not based on the nobility of being, but on the "commonness of predication" (*communitas praedicationis*). *Transcendens* in this sense means what can be said of every being. Armand differentiates this mode, since there are two kinds of predication: formal or essential and denominative predication. What is said of every being by formal predication, so that it belongs to every being, is called *transcendens*. According to this second mode, which corresponds to the "common use of the word", *transcendens* is said properly (*proprie*) of six predicates: *ens, unum, verum, bonum, res* and *aliquid*, that is, the basic concepts, which Armand had put at the beginning of his *Declaratio*.[12]

Transcendens can thirdly be called what by denominative predication is said of all second intentions and the "first *transcendentia*" (*sc*. the just mentioned transcendental predicates of the first intention), for instance, the term '*universale*', which is said of "being" and of "genus". However, this third mode—Armand observes—is not as common and proper as the second one.[13]

In sum, the *Declaratio* distinguishes three senses of the term *transcendens*; at the same time Armand provides insight into the actual usage of the name by indicating in each case whether the meaning is or is not current. *Transcendens* means (i) what transcends and goes beyond every being, (ii) what is formally predicated of every being—the current use of the word—, and (iii) what is commonly said of the *transcendentia* and the second intentions.

Although Armand states that the "transcending", expressed in the term '*transcendens*', occurs "in three manners", it is evident that the essential division in his explanation is twofold, namely the distinction between transcending through "the nobility of being" and through "the commonness of predication". The third mode is a modification

[12] *Ibid*.: "Alio modo accipitur transcendens non ab entitatis nobilitate, sed a praedicationis communitate, et sic illud, quod potest praedicari de omni ente, dicitur transcendens, sed est duplex praedicatio. Una formalis, ut homo est animal, alia denominatiua, ut homo est albus, homo est species. Illud ergo, quod praedicatione formali praedicatur de omni ente, eo modo quo cuilibet enti conuenit, transcendens uocatur: propterea formalitas dicitur transcendens, quasi trans omne ens, uel transiens omne ens, scilicet formalis praedicationis, et sic transcendens dicitur proprie de illis sex, scilicet ente, uno, uero, bono, re, aliquid. Et hic est communis usus uocabuli".

[13] *Ibid*.: "Illud autem quod praedicatione denominatiue praedicatur de omnibus secundis intentionibus et de primis transcendentibus, potest etiam dici transcendens, quia hoc quod dico ens, est uniuersale, hoc quod dico genus, est uniuersale, et sic de aliis. Et nec iste modus transcendentis est ita communis et proprius sicut secundus".

of the second one, which is historically occasioned by a peculiarity of Duns Scotus's doctrine of the transcendentals.

Whereas in the thirteenth century the *communia* or *transcendentia* are clearly distinguished from the univocally predicated *universalia*, Scotus's thesis of the univocity of "being" resulted in homogenizing the transcendentals with the universals. But in his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Scotus stresses that "being" cannot be reduced to one of the five traditional universals or predicables—*genus, species, differentia, proprium* and *accidens*. The domain of the predicables must be extended to a sixth one, an *universale transcendens*, as "being".[14] Thus the term '*universale*' in a sense surpasses the *transcendentia*, insofar as it is common to them and the genera.[15] Armand's third mode of *transcendens* refers to this kind of surpassing.

The third mode is as if the *transcendens* was quared, since it even transcends the *transcendentia*. To the historian, this brings to mind the theory of the *supertranscendentia*, which was advanced in the sixteenth century (see ch. XV). According to this doctrine, the *transcendentia* must again be surpassed in order to conceive "being" in a more comprehensive way. "Supertranscendental" notions, as *opinabile* and *cogitabile*, include both real being and being of reason (*ens rationis*). Although there may be some parallels, an essential difference is that Armand's third mode is not meant as a critique of the doctrine of the transcendentals. This mode is based, he emphasizes, on denominative predication and what is said of something in this manner is extrinsic to it. From the perspective of the history of philosophy, his first and second mode are more relevant.

In fact, Armand's *Declaratio* presents two distinct concepts under the name '*transcendens*', based on two types of *transcensus*, which differ from one another with respect to that which transcends, i.e. the terminus of the process of surpassing, and to that which is transcended. *Transcendens* (1) relates to God, who is beyond every being; what is

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[14] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum*, IV, q. 1, n. 51 (ed. The Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera philosophica*, Vol. III, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997, p. 308).

[15] Instructive is the *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, written by Scotus's student Francis of Meyronnes at roughly the same time as Armand's *Declaratio*. In a. 6 (ed. H. Möhle, Leuven 2004 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales. Bibliotheca, 7), p. 140), he states: "Prima [conclusio] est quod transcendentia illa quae sunt aliquo modo ente communiora, sicut ratio universalis et transcendentis, non includuntur quidditative in aliquo quia omnia pertinent ad rationem secundarum intentionum". Cf. ibid., a. 5 (ed. Möhle, p. 136): "Ista autem ponuntur de illis denominative (…)".

transcended is the material or created world. *Transcendens* (2) relates to the common features of reality; what is transcended is the categorial multiplicity or particularity of things. For the sake of terminological clarity, we signify the former type as "transcendent", the latter one—in accordance with usage since Suárez—as "transcendental".

The distinction of two modes of *transcendens* appears to be a vital idea. The same distinction was propounded by the Lutherian philosopher and theologian Johannes Scharf(f) in the seventeenth century. The title of his main work identifies metaphysics with "Transcendental Theory": *Theoria transcendentalis Primae Philosophiae quam vocant Metaphysicam*. Scharf observes that "authors" have justly discerned a twofold *transcensus*, namely either by "the nobility of being" (*entis nobilitate*) or by "the commonness of predication" (*praedicationis communitate*). Because of the eminence of being, God is called *transcendens*; because of the scope of predication, *transcendentia* are the most universal concepts that are predicated of all things.[16]

The outcome of our analysis is that the medieval term '*transcendens*', in its ambivalence, stands for two basic words, which represent divergent philosophical orientations: one understands itself as a "philosophy of the transcendent", the other as "transcendental philosophy".[17] The history of First Philosophy or metaphysics is determined by a tension between these two tendencies,[18] but also shows, as we shall see in the course of our study, that they are intertwined. So it might not be a simple coincidence that the different modes of transcending were covered by one and the same term in the Middle Ages.

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[16] Johannes Scharf, *Theoria transcendentalis Primae Philosophiae, quam vocant Metaphysicam* (ed. Wittenberg 1624, p. 261): "Notant vero auctores, et recte, quod transscensus iste contingat duplici modo, vel entis nobilitate vel praedicationis communitate. Illo modo nimirum, ob eminentiam et sublimitatem Entitatis Deus dicitur Transscendens, et res divinae (…). Praedicationis latitudine transscendentia sunt universalissima conceptus, qui de omnibus rebus praedicantur". Cf. U. G. Leinsle, *Das Ding und die Methode. Methodische Konstitution und Gegenstand der frühen protestantischen Metaphysik*, Vol. I, Augsburg 1985 (Reihe wissenschaftlicher Texte, 36), pp. 346–351.

[17] Cf. the excellent analysis of these tendencies in O. D. Duintjer, *De vraag naar het transcendentale, vooral in verband met Heidegger en Kant*, Leiden 1966 (with a German summary, pp. 396–407). Unfortunately, this dissertation—because of the language in which it was written—has not received the attention it deserves.

[18] Cf. L. Honnefelder, "Transzendent oder transzendental: Über die Möglichkeit von Metaphysik", in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 92 (1985), pp. 273–290.

1.3 *Transcendens* (1): A philosophy of the Transcendent[19]

1. The transcendent orientation of philosophy has older roots than the transcendental one. The verb *transcendere* as a philosophical term emerges in Augustine's work for the first time. With this word, he interestingly characterizes the proper intention of the "highest philosophers", the Platonists. His typification is not unjustified, for Plato has not only been hailed as "the philosopher of the transcendent", but also been credited with "the discovery of transcendence".[20] For him, philosophizing *is* a process of transcending, the ascent of the soul to the unconditioned principle. In his *Politeia* (509B), Plato coined the pregnant expression "beyond (*epekeina*) being" for the absolute transcendence of the highest principle. The Good that confers knowability and being on things "is itself not being (*ousia*), but is still beyond (*epekeina*) being, surpassing that in dignity and power". Neoplatonism adopted the phrase *epekeina* for expressing the radical transcendence of the first principle, which is called the One. The One is free from any categorial determination, it is "none of the things that are", because it is "beyond being".[21]

In his characterization of the Platonist's intention by the verb *transcendere*, Augustine gave their purport a personal twist by interpreting it as an *itinerarium mentis in Deum*. "The highest philosophers saw that no body is God; in search of God they therefore transcended (*transcenderunt*) all bodies. Because they also saw that what is mutable is not the supreme God, the principle of all things, they transcended every soul and the mutable spirits". This text from *De civitate Dei* (VIII, c. 6) was incorporated by Peter Lombard (d. 1160) in his *Sentences*[22]—a fact that

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[19] Cf. L. Honnefelder / W. Schüßler (eds.), *Transzendenz. Zu einem Grundwort der klassischen Metaphysik*, Paderborn 1992.

[20] J. Halfwassen, "Philosophie als Transzendieren. Der Aufstieg zum höchsten Prinzip bei Platon und Plotin", in: *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter* 3 (1998), pp. 29–42; id., "Metaphysik und Transzendenz", in: *Jahrbuch für Religionsphilosophie* 1 (2002), pp. 13–27. The author advances the thesis (p. 13) that metaphysical thought "comes to itself only through the discovery of transcendence". Cf. also C. J. de Vogel, *Plato. De filosoof van het transcendente*, Baarn 1968.

[21] Plotin, *Enneads*, V, 1, 6; *ibid.*, V, 5, 6.

[22] Peter Lombard, *Sententiae*, I, d. 3, c. 1 (ed. I. Brady, t. I, Grottaferrata 1971 (Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 4), p. 31): "Ut enim Augustinus ait in libro *De civitate Dei* (VIII, c. 6), 'Viderunt summi philosophi nullum corpus esse Deum; et ideo cuncta corpora transcenderunt, quaerentes Deum. Viderunt etiam quidquid mutabile est non esse summum Deum, omniumque principium; et ideo omnem animam, mutabilesque spiritus transcenderunt'".

promoted the reception of Augustine's view, because Lombard's work became a textbook in the curriculum of the Faculty of Theology in the thirteenth century.

Augustine employs the word *transcendere* in two contexts. It first signifies—as in his description of the Platonic purport—the ascent of the soul towards God. In this dynamic sense the term has a clearly existential moment: in his search of God, man ought to surpass not only all that is external, but also himself. *Transcende et te ipsum* is an imperative, typical of Augustine's thought.[23] But he also uses *transcendere* as a designation for the end of the human ascent, which is superior to all temporal things. God's essence has to be thought of as "the highest substance that transcends every mutable creature".[24] The participle *transcendens* as a designation for God does not, however, appear frequently in the Middle Ages. Armand is right, when he, in his *Declaratio*, observes that this meaning of *transcendens* is not the common use of the word.

2. Another channel, through which the Neo-Platonic idea of transcendence was transmitted to the Middle Ages, was the *corpus dionysiacum*. It enjoyed a high prestige in the Middle Ages and was several times translated into Latin and commented upon. The author poses as the Dionysius, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (17,34), who joined the Apostle Paul after his speech about "the unknown God" on the Areopagus in Athens. But the medieval commentators did not have any doubt about the philosophical position of the author; his intellectual home was (Neo-)Platonism. Dionysius follows, Aquinas observes, the Platonic way of thought.[25] Modern studies have revealed Dionysius's dependency on Proclus who died A.D. 485, which is an important clue for the dating of the *corpus*.[26]

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[23] Augustine, *De vera religione*, 39, n. 72 (ed. K.-D. Daur, Turnhout 1962 (Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 32), p. 234): "Noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi. In interiore homine habitat veritas. Et si tuam naturam mutabilem inveneris, transcende et te ipsum. Sed memento, cum te transcendis, ratiocinantem animam te transcendere". Cf. N. Fischer, "Transzendieren und Transzendenz in Augustins Confessiones", in: L. Honnefelder / W. Schüßler (eds.), *Transzendenz*, pp. 115–136.

[24] Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium*, tract. I, 8 (ed. A. Mayer, Turnhout 1954 (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina, 36), p. 5).

[25] Thomas Aquinas, *In librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio*, prooem. (ed. C. Pera, Turin – Rome 1950, pp. 1–2).

[26] Cf. H.-D. Saffrey, "Nouveaux liens objectifs entre le pseudo-Denys et Proclus", in: *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 63 (1979), pp. 3–16. Also in id.,

This influence is evident in the work *De divinis nominibus*, in which Dionysius elucidates those divine names which he calls the *aitiologica*, names that manifest God's causality with respect to the creatures.[27] For Dionysius, the primary of these names is "the Good" (c. 4); next he treats of the Neoplatonic triad of perfections, i.e. "Being" (c. 5), "Life" (c. 6) and "Wisdom" (c. 7), and he concludes his treatise with discussing the names "Perfect" and "One" (c. 13). The two Platonic designations of the Absolute, "the Good" and "the One", are deliberately placed at the beginning and the end of the series of names. In *De divinis nominibus* Dionysius intends an account of the names of God on the basis of Neoplatonic ontology.

On nearly every page of this account the Areopagite emphasizes God's transcendence. As causal origin he necessarily goes beyond his effects by negation and by preeminence. Both aspects are conveyed by Dionysius's statement: "The cause of all things that are, is itself none of these but super-substantially (*hyperousios*) surpasses them all"; and by his claim: "God is all as cause of all (…) and is beyond all (*super omnia*) as super-existing supersubstantiality before all".[28] To express the divine beyondness Dionysius employs the whole repertory of terms that were customary in the Neoplatonic philosophy of the transcendent. Besides terms coined with the prefix *hyper* (*super*) it includes, of course, the phrase "beyond (*epekeina*) [being]". The phrase was conveyed by *transcendens* in the Latin translations of Dionysius from the fifteenth century. His assertion, for instance, "the Godhead is beyond all things" (c. 4, 4: *pantoon epekeina*) was translated by Johannes Saracenus (ca. 1167) as "*super* omnia", by Robert Grosseteste (ca. 1235) as "*ultra* omnia", and in the Renaissance translations of Ambrosius Traversari and Marsilio Ficino as "*transcendens* omnia".[29]

Recherches sur le Néoplatonisme après Plotin, Paris 1990 (Histoire des doctrines de l'Antiquité classique, 14), pp. 227–248.

[27] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De divinis nominibus*, c. 2, n. 3 (ed. B. R. Suchla, in: *Corpus Dionysiacum*, Vol. 1, Berlin – New York 1990 (Patristische Texte und Studien, 33), p. 125).

[28] *Ibid.*, c. 1, n. 5 (p. 117) and c. 5, n. 8 (pp. 186–188). Cf. F. O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, Leiden – New York – Köln 1992 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 32), pp. 76–79.

[29] *Dionysiaca. Recueil donnant l'ensemble des traductions latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys de l'Aréopage* (ed. P. Chevallier), 2 vols., Bruges 1937–1950: Vol. I, p. 162. Cf. J. Halfwassen, "Transzendenz, Transzendieren I", in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. X, Basel 1999, pp. 1442–1447.

3. In still a third way the Neoplatonic philosophy of the transcendent made itself felt in the Middle Ages. The importance of this aspect of its influence consists in the fact that it affected the interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. His work contains divergent determinations of this discipline; the Neoplatonic interest concerns the exposition in the sixth book, in which Aristotle presents a threefold division of theoretical philosophy. He argues that, if there is something which is eternal, immovable and immaterial, its inquiry belongs to a theoretical science—neither, however, to physics nor to mathematics (for these sciences do not deal with things of this sort), but to a science prior to both. This science is called "theology", since it is obvious, Aristotle states, that if the divine is present anywhere, it is present in immovable and immaterial things. And the most dignified science must deal with the "most dignified genus" (*honorabilissimum genus*) of being; hence it is "First Philosophy".[30]

The Neoplatonic commentators of Aristotle in Late Antiquity, such as Ammonius and Simplicius, eagerly adopted this division and identified First Philosophy with theology. Moreover, they gave an interpretation of the name 'meta-physics' as regards to its content: this science is so named, since it deals with that which is "beyond (*epekeina*) the physical" or "above (*hyper*) nature".[31] Metaphysics is called First Philosophy, because its object is the first being, which surpasses matter and motion, the divine being. Only insofar as this science considers the first being, it considers being qua being. Metaphysics is philosophy of the transcendent.

The theological understanding of metaphysics, which was transmitted by Boethius to the Middle Ages (see ch. 2.1), determined the reception of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the first half of the thirteenth

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[30] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VI, c. 1, 1026b 10–22. Aristoteles latinus, Vol. XXV/3,2: *Metaphysica, recensio et translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeka* (ed. G. Vuillemin-Diem, Leiden – New York – Köln 1995, p. 127): "Non enim immanifestum quia si alicubi divinum existit, in tali natura existit; et honorabilissimam scientiam oportet circa honorabilissimum genus esse".

[31] K. Kremer, *Der Metaphysikbegriff in den Aristoteles-Kommentaren der Ammonius-Schule*, Münster 1960 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 39/1). Cf. C. Steel, "Theology as First Philosophy. The Neoplatonic Concept of Metaphysics", in: C. Esposito / P. Porro (eds.), *Metaphysica, sapientia, scientia divina. Soggetto e statuto della filosofia prima nel Medioevo. Atti del Convegno della Società Italiana per lo Studio del Pensiero Medievale, Bari, 9–12 giugno 2004*, Turnhout 2005 (Quaestio, 5), pp. 3–21.

century, as contemporary university textbooks show.[32] A striking example is the so-called "Guide" for the study of arts, composed by an anonymous master of the Parisian Faculty of Arts at about 1230–40. The section on metaphysics states that this science deals with that which is completely, both ontologically and conceptually, separated from matter and motion. The Guide adds an etymological explanation of the name 'metaphysics': "it is said from *metha*, which means '*trans*', and *phisis*, which means '*natura*', as it were '*transcendens phisim*' in the sense that it most considers what transcends nature (*de transcendentibus naturam*), namely, the divine".[33] The term *transcendens* expresses the distinctive feature of metaphysics as the science of God.

1.4 *Transcendens* (2): Transcendental philosophy[34]

Another transcensus*: A "semantic" transcendence*

According to Martin Heidegger the real concern of medieval metaphysics was—under the influence of Christian theology—"that which is beyond" ("das Jenseitige").[35] But this view is one-sided: After 1250,

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[32] A. de Libera, "Structure du corpus scolaire de la métaphysique dans la première moitié du XIII[e] siècle", in: C. Lafleur (ed.), *L'enseignement de la philosophie au XIII[e] siècle. Autour du "Guide de l'étudiant" du ms. Ripoll 109*, Turnhout 1997 (Studia Artistarum, 5), pp. 61–88. Cf. O. Boulnois, "Le besoin de métaphysique. Théologie et structures des métaphysiques médiévales", in: J.-L. Solère / Z. Kałuża (eds.), *La servante et la consolatrice. La philosophie dans ses rapports avec la théologie au Moyen Âge*, Paris 2002 (Textes et Traditions, 3), pp. 45–94.

[33] C. Lafleur (ed.), *Le "Guide de l'étudiant" d'un maitre anonyme de la faculté des arts de Paris au XIII[e] siècle*, Québec 1992 (Publications du Laboratoire de Philosophie Ancienne et Médiévale de la Faculté de Philosophie de l'Université de Laval, 1), § 9, p. 33: "Possunt enim res nature tripliciter considerari: uno modo prout sunt omnino separate a motu et a materia secundum esse et diffinitionem, et de talibus rebus est methaphisica. Et dicitur a *metha*, quod est 'trans', et *phisis*, quod est 'natura', quasi 'transcendens phisim', in eo quod de maxime transcendentibus naturam considerat, scilicet de divinis". Cf. the Introduction into philosophy *Ut ait Tullius* (ca. 1250), edited by G. Dahan, "Une introduction à l'étude de la philosophie: *Ut ait Tullius*", in: C. Lafleur (ed.), *L'enseignement de la philosophie au XIII[e] siècle*, pp. 3–58, here p. 52: "(…) et dicitur methaphisica a *metha*, quod est 'trans', et *phisis*, quod est 'natura' quasi 'transcendens naturam' ".

[34] Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Transzendental II: Die Anfänge bis Meister Eckhart", in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. X, Basel 1999, pp. 1360–65; L. Honnefelder / H. Möhle, "Transzendental III: Duns Scotus und der Skotismus", in: *ibid.*, pp. 1365–71; U. G. Leinsle, "Transzendental IV: Renaissance, katholische und protestantische Schulphilosophie", in: *ibid.*, pp. 1372–76.

[35] M. Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, Frankfurt am Main 1983 (Gesamtausgabe II, Vol. 29/30), p. 64.

an understanding of metaphysics developed that was connected with another concept of *transcendens*. We shall examine the conditions and presuppositions of this transformation in the next chapter; here we will only consider conceptual implications.

Illustrative of the transformation is the etymological explanation of the name 'metaphysics', which Duns Scotus presents in his *Questions on the Metaphysics*. It is a curious explication, since it eliminates any reference to physics: "It is from '*meta*', which means '*trans*', and '*ycos*', which means '*scientia*'. It is, as it were, the 'transcending science' (*scientia transcendens*), because it is concerned with the *transcendentia*".[36] The contrast to the explanation in the Parisian "Guide" could not be stronger. *Transcendens* in Scotus's text does not mean "transcendent", but rather "transcendental", and qualifies the scope of this science. In the passage just preceding his account of the name, Scotus had introduced the term *transcendentia* as another name for the *communissima*, such as being qua being and its properties. His phrase *scientia transcendens* is the most explicit expression of the transformation, but it is by no means, as we shall see, an isolated case.

Because of the ambivalence of the term *transcendens* modern scholars have not always recognized the novelty of this philosophical development. Scotus's *scientia transcendens* has been misunderstood as another example of the Platonic type of metaphysics, that is, a philosophy of the transcendent.[37] Heinrich Knittermeyer, who devoted an extensive study to the history of the term "transcendental", was of the opinion that "the historical origins (…) essentially go back to Augustine" who translated the Plotinian *epekeina* with '*transcendere*'.[38] But the transcendental *transcensus* is quite different from the Neoplatonic-Augustinian one.

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[36] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum*, I, prol., n. 18 (ed. The Franciscan Institute, Vol. III, p. 9): "Et hanc scientiam vocamus metaphysicam, quae dicitur a 'meta', quod est 'trans', et 'ycos' 'scientia', quasi transcendens scientia, quia est de transcendentibus". For the meaning of *ycos*, the editors refer to Lambert of Auxerre, *Summa logicae*, c. 1 (ed. F. Alessio, Florence 1971, p. 4): "Dicitur autem logica a logos quod est sermo et ycos quod est scientia, quasi scientia de sermone".

[37] C. A. van Peursen / E. J. Petersma (eds.), *Metafysica. Geschiedenis van een begrip*, Meppel 1980, pp. 74–75.

[38] H. Knittermeyer, *Der Terminus "transzendental" in seiner historischen Entwicklung bis zu Kant*, Marburg 1920, pp. 8–9. Cf. id., "Transzendent und Transzendental", in: *Festschrift für Paul Natorp. Zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, Berlin – Leipzig 1924, pp. 195–214, in particular p. 201.

As Armand indicates in his *Declaratio, transcendens* in the sense of transcendental does not refer to "the nobility of being", but to "the commonness of predication". A systematic doctrine of the "predicables" or universals that can be predicated of many things was elaborated by Porphyry in the third century in his "Introduction" (*Isagoge*) to Aristotle's *Categories*—the treatise was generally called *De praedicabilibus* or *De universalibus* in the Middle Ages.[39] Porphyry distinguishes five predicables on the basis of their different relations to the subject of the predication. If the predicate contains what belongs to the essence of the subject, it is *genus, species* or *differentia*. If the predicate does not belong to the essence of the subject, but is convertible with it, it is a *proprium*; if it is not convertible, it is an *accidens*. The horizon of Porphyry's classification is the Aristotelian order of the categories, for the highest or most general genera (*genera generalissima*) signify the ten predicaments. The amazing influence of his small treatise appears from the medieval commentary tradition: it was commented upon by (among others) Boethius, Peter Abelard, Albert the Great, Duns Scotus and William of Ockham.

"Being" is predicated of all things, but how is it related to the order of the predicables? In our analysis of Armand's *Declaratio*, we mentioned Duns Scotus's claim that the domain of the predicables must be extended to a sixth one, an *universale transcendens*, such as "being". The question as to the "sufficiency" of Porphyry's classification of predicables was explicitly raised by the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century commentators. An interesting example is the commentary of the Scotist Francis of Meyronnes (d. 1328), who is also the author of the first medieval treatise on the transcendentals. He objects that being is predicated of all things and yet is not listed among the predicables. In his reply, Francis distinguishes between *praedicabilia limitata* and *transcendentia*. Porphyry deals exclusively with the "limited" predicables, to which "being" does not belong; from this perspective his enumeration is "sufficient".[40]

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[39] Porphyry, *Isagoge* (ed. A. Busse), Berlin 1887 (Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, IV/1). *Isagoge, Translatio Boethii* (ed. L. Minio-Paluello), in: Aristoteles latinus, Vol. I/6–7, Bruges – Paris 1966. On the medieval interpretation of this work, A. de Libera (introduction and notes) / A.-Ph. Segonds, *Porphyre, Isagoge*, Paris 1998, pp. CXXVII–CXL. Cf. J. Barnes (transl. with a comm.), *Porphyry. Introduction*, Oxford 2003.

[40] Francis of Meyronnes, *Passus super universalia*, 1 (ed. Venice 1517, 2ra): "Primo quia ens est praedicabile cum de omnibus praedicetur et tamen non ponitur ibi aliquid istorum praedicabilium (…). Ad primum dicitur quod hic Plato non intendit procedere de praedicabili secundum quod extenditur tam ad transcendentia quam ad limitata, sed solum quantum ad praedicabilia limitata, tale autem non est ens et

"Being" is not a genus, but a *transcendens*: the term expresses a "semantic" transcendence, insofar as "being" surpasses the most general genera and signifies what is common to things.[41] The same holds for other terms that transcend the genera, such as "one" and "thing".[42]

The effect of this *transcensus* is the opening of a new dimension of reality, the "suprapredicamental" or "transcendental" order. In his treatise *De intentionibus*, the Franciscan Girald Odonis (d. 1349) distinguishes three degrees of first intentions, in which things can be ordered: *praedicamentalis*, like "substance", "animal", "man", *subpraedicamentalis*, for instance, "Socrates" or "Plato", and *suprapraedicamentalis*, such as "being" (*ens*), "thing" (*res*) and "something" (*aliquid*). These degrees are themselves the corresponding second intentions, *generalitas, singularitas* and *transcendentia* respectively (note that the last term here appears as an abstract noun). [43]

The emergence of the term transcendens *(2)*

The term *transcendens* in the new sense of "transcendental" was not yet usual in the thirteenth century. The expression is absent in what seems to be the first systematic account of a doctrine of the transcendentals, presented by Philip the Chancellor in his *Summa de bono*

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ideo remanet divisio sufficiens". Cf. H. Möhle, "Transzendentale Begriffe und wahre Philosophie. Ein Beitrag zu den logischen Schriften des Franciscus de Mayronis", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen*, pp. 304–319.

[41] The phrase "semantic" transcendence has been suggested by L. M. de Rijk, "The Aristotelian Background of Medieval *transcendentia*: A Semantic Approach", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen*, pp. 3–22.

[42] Cf. Albert the Great, *Super Porphyrium de V universalibus*, Tractatus de specie, c. 3 (ed. M. Santos Noya, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. I/1a, Münster 2004, p. 64): "ens enim est ante substantiam per intellectum (…); et similiter potest obici de quolibet quod genera transcendit, ut est res, unum et aliquid". Id., *Summa theologiae*, I, tract. 6, q. 27, c. 3 (ed. D. Siedler, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXXV/1, Münster 1978, p. 205): "bonum dicit intentionem communem et est de transcendentibus omne genus sicut et ens". Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de malo*, q. 1, a. 1 ad 11 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXIII, Rome 1982, p. 7): "(…) prout genus dici potest id quod genera transcendit, sicut ens et unum".

[43] Gerard of Odo, *De intentionibus*, I, a. 6, n. 233 (ed. L. M. de Rijk, in: *Giraldus Odonis O.F.M. Opera Philosophica*, Vol. II, Leiden – Boston 2005 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 86), p. 496): "Est ergo sciendum quod rerum significabilium alie sunt in gradu predicamentali vel subpredicamentali vel suprapredicamentali; in gradu predicamentali, ut substantia, animal, homo; in subpredicamentali, ut Sortes, Plato; in suprapredicamentali, ut ens et res et aliquid. Alie vero res sunt ipsi gradus, puta gradus predicamentales, genus et species, gradus subpredicamentales, singulare et individuum, gradus suprapredicamentales, transcendentia ipsa". Cf. *ibid.*, III, a. 4, n. 314 (p. 533): "secunda [intentio] vero est ipse gradus predicamentalis vel subpredicamentalis vel suprapredicamentalis, ut generalitas, singularitas, transcendentia".

ca. 1225–28. The author never employs the phrase *transcendentia*, but speaks of the *communissima*, which remained the current expression in subsequent expositions.[44] The term *transcendens/transcendentia* was neither used in the *Summa* attributed to Alexander of Hales, it appears only once in Bonaventure, incidentally in Albert the Great, somewhat more frequently (14 times) in Thomas Aquinas, but is again absent in Henry of Ghent. It was not until Duns Scotus and the Scotist "school" of the fourteenth century that the expression became common. Albert the Great has been called "the true author of the name *transcendentia*".[45] This claim is certainly incorrect, but it is instructive to consider his use of the term more closely.

Albert introduces the expression in two different contexts, in his commentaries on Aristotle's logical writings and in his *Metaphysics* commentary. In his logical commentaries (datable 1255–1260), the phrase *nomina transcendentia* appears in the discussion of the question concerning "indefinite names" (*nomina infinita*). Albert underlines the distinctive character of transcendental terms by pointing out that they cannot be made indefinite. "It should be noted, however, that transcendental names (*nomina transcendentia*), as *res, ens* and *aliquid*, cannot be made infinite (*infinitari*)", because they do not signify a determinate nature that can be made indefinite by the addition of the particle "not".[46]

A peculiar use of the phrase *termini transcendentes* is to be found in Albert's commentary on the *Prior Analytics*. The subject of the first book of this work is the syllogism in its bare form, called *syllogismus simplex*. The formal structure of the syllogism can be framed by using indeterminate logical symbols. Because a syllogism *simplex* is not proper to any specific matter, but is applicable to everything, we use, Albert states, *termini transcendentes*, such as the letters A, B and C. His argument is that these terms signify "nothing" (*nihil*) in the sense that they

[44] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, prol. (ed. N. Wicki, Vol. I, Bern 1985 (Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi: Opera Philosophica Mediae Aetatis Selecta, II), p. 4): "Communissima autem hec sunt: ens, unum, verum, bonum".

[45] H. Knittermeyer, *Der Terminus "transzendental"*, p. 16 and p. 33.

[46] Albert the Great, *Super duos libros Aristotelis Peri hermeneias tractatus VII*, tract. 2, c. 5 (ed. A. Borgnet, Vol. 1, pp. 393–394): "Attendendum tamen est quod nomina transcendentia infinitari non possunt, sicut res, ens et aliquid. (…) Ad hoc enim quod aliquod nomen infinitetur, oportet quod habeat qualitatem determinatam quam non habent res, ens et aliquid". On the importance of this topic for the doctrine of the transcendentals, G. Ventimiglia, *Differenza e Contradizione. Il problema dell' essere in Tommaso d'Aquino: "esse", "diversum", "contradictio"*, Milano 1997 (Metafisica e Storia della Metafisica, 17), pp. 214–230.

do not signify any determinate matter, and "everything" (*omnia*), insofar as they are applicable to all matters.[47] It is evident that the *termini transcendentes* are not taken here in their proper, significative function, but are used to indicate non-significative variables in a syllogism. Albert's use of the phrase *termini transcendentes* in the sense of logical symbols strongly depends on Robert Kilwardby's lectures on the *logica vetus*, given in Paris ca. 1240. Kilwardby's commentary on the *Prior Analytics* employs the same terminology: a syllogism *simpliciter* is composed of *termini transcendentes*.[48]

In his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (composed ca. 1264), Albert concludes that this science is concerned with "the first concepts (*prima*) and *transcendentia*".[49] His usage is not original though: The first author who applies the term *transcendentia* to a metaphysical doctrine of the most common determinations of things seems to be Roland of Cremona, the first Dominican Master in Paris (1229–1230), in his commentary on the *Sentences* (edited between 1236–1244).[50] Albert's commentaries show the two extremes in the meaning of *transcendens* (2): it can be an empty concept without any content and a metaphysical basic word.[51]

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[47] Albert the Great, *Super librum Priorum Analyticorum primum tractatus IX*, tract. 1, c. 9 (ed. A. Borgnet, Vol. 1, p. 472): "Et quia de syllogismo loquimur simplici, qui tantum formaliter syllogismus est, et in omni materia habet poni, et nullius materiae est proprius, ideo terminis utimur transcendentibus, nihil et omnia significantibus. 'Nihil' dico, quia nullam determinant materiam. 'Omnia' vero dico significantibus: quia omnibus materiis sunt applicabiles, sicut sunt A, B, C".

[48] Robert Kilwardby, *In libros Priorum Analyticorum expositio* (ed. P. O. Lewry, in: *Robert Kilwardby's Writings on the 'Logica Vetus' Studied with Regard to Their Teaching and Method*, Oxford 1978 [unpublished Doctoral Thesis], pp. 384–385): "Et quia (…) nichil concernens rem determinati generis est pars sillogismi simpliciter (…): nichil concernens rem determinati generis erit pars enunciationis. Et ita enunciatio in hac doctrina non debet constitui ex terminis concernentibus rem generum, sed ex terminis transcendentibus. (…) Si ergo sciencia de sillogismo simpliciter traditur in terminis transcendentibus (…). Unde constituitur sillogismus simpliciter ex terminis transcendentibus".

[49] Albert the Great, *Metaphysica*, I, tract. 1, c. 2 (ed. B. Geyer, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XVI/1, Münster 1960, p. 5).

[50] Roland of Cremona, *Quaestiones super libros Sententiarum* (ms. Vat. barb. lat. 729, fol. 7^{vb} / Paris, Maz. 795, fol. 7^{vb}): "Si quis autem vellet dicere, quod hoc verbum 'creat' at alia significantia accionem dicta de deo significant creatum generale, sed quid posset esse illud unum creatum quod est significatum per illa verba nisi esset unum de transcendentibus scilicet ens unum verum [*om. Maz.*] aliquid et res?". Cf. E. Filthaut, *Roland von Cremona O.P. und die Anfänge der Scholastik im Predigerorden. Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte der älteren Dominikaner*, Vechta 1936, p. 115.

[51] The use of *termini transcendentes* in the sense of logical symbols was continued in the fourteenth century. Cf. Giraldus Odonis, *Logica*, I, 6 (ed. L. M. de Rijk, in: *Giraldus*

Logic and metaphysics are the domains where the term *transcendens* appears. The exact historical origin of the term *transcendentia* is uncertain, but there is strong evidence that the phrase *termini transcendentes* originated in logical treatises of the twelfth and early thirteenth century. These treatises recognize the distinctive semantic nature of some terms, such as *res, aliquid, ens* and *unum*, for instance in the question concerning "indefinite names"—the issue taken up by Albert in his commentary—and in the question whether names are predicated of God and creatures univocally or equivocally. This group of terms is designated as *nomina quae transcendunt generalissima* or *suprapraedicamentalia* (see ch. 2.1: *Aetas Boetiana*). In order to express the semantic transcendence of these terms the designation *nomina transcendentia* is introduced in the *Dialectica Monacensis*, in a discussion of the equivocity of names.[52] The treatise is dated to the first quarter of the thirteenth century;[53] its use of *transcendentia* therefore constitutes one of the earliest known appearances of the new sense of the term.

However, what is entirely missing in the logical treatises of the Boethian age, is a systematic analysis of the relation of the transcendentals to one another and their differences. What is also absent is the metaphysical dimension, which is constitutive of the formation of the transcendental theory in the thirteenth century. One should therefore make a distinction between the origin of the term *transcendens* (2) and the first attempt at a systematic doctrine. The historical facts confront us with a paradox: the origin of the name is without a doctrine, the first account of a doctrine (in Philip the Chancellor) is without the name.

Odonis O.F.M. Opera Philosophica, Vol. I, Leiden – Boston 1997 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 60), p. 89): "Termini vero transcendentes convenientiores sunt significativis ad exemplificandum de forma sillogismi simpliciter pro eo quod abstrahant ab omni materia speciali".

[52] *Dialectica Monacensis* (ed. L. M. de Rijk, in: *Logica Modernorum. A Contribution to the History of Early Terminist Logic*, Vol. II/2, Assen 1967, pp. 560–561): "Si ergo fit [equivocatio] ratione significationis, hoc potest esse tribus modis: (…) <ii> aut unum principaliter, reliquum per posterius (…). Ad hunc [secundum modum] reducuntur omnes equivocationes que sunt circa nomina transcendentia. Qualia sunt hec: 'res', 'ens', 'unum', 'universale', 'possibile', 'contingens', 'idem', 'diversum', et similia".

[53] In his edition (*Logica Modernorum*, Vol. II/1, Assen 1967, pp. 412–414), L. M. de Rijk dated the *Dialectica Monacensis* to the last decades of the twelfth century. In a more recent essay ("The Aristotelian Background of Medieval *transcendentia*", p. 9) he suggested a later dating: the first quarter of the thirteenth century.

Treatises De transcendentibus

Most medieval accounts of the transcendentals are part of a *Summa*, an Aristotle commentary or a collection of disputed questions. But there are three treatises that are entirely devoted to the doctrine; two of them date from the fourteenth century, one from the beginning of the sixteenth century. What do they say about *transcendens* in the sense of "transcendental"?

The first separate treatise on the transcendentals is the *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, composed by the "Prince of Scotists" Francis of Meyronnes ca. 1327/8 (see also ch. 10.2). It is the only one among the three treatises that discusses the concept of transcendentality: Art. 1 raises the question *Quid est transcendens?* The discussion shows that the concept was not homogeneous in the Middle Ages. Francis opposes the "common" opinion and his own conception. The "common" opinion, which in fact is the dominant view of the thirteenth century, maintains that "only what goes around (*circuit*) every genus, such as the *ratio* of being and its properties" is *transcendens*.[54] The pregnant term *circuit* was used by Albert the Great as well as Thomas Aquinas to express the predicative commonness of the transcendentals.[55] Francis criticizes the "common" opinion because of its too narrow conception of transcendentality; it is not necessary that a transcendental is found in all categories. One of his counterarguments claims that "nothing is in God unless it is *transcendens*—nota bene sustained by a reference to pseudo-Dionysius's work *De divinis nominibus*. Francis finally gives a purely negative definition of *transcendens*: "that which is not in a determinate genus, but abstracts from every categorial *ratio*".[56] The definition adopts Scotus's under-

[54] Francis of Meyronnes, *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, a. 1 (ed. H. Möhle, Leuven 2004 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales. Bibliotheca, 7), p. 107).

[55] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, n. 3 ad secundum (ed. P. Simon, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXXVII/1, Münster 1972, p. 114): "(…) sed non de bono, secundum quod circuit omnia genera (…) et hoc bonum convertitur cum ente et est in omnibus entibus". Id., *Metaphysica*, X, tract. 1, c. 7 (ed. Geyer, p. 441): "Utrumque istorum [*sc.* unum et ens] sequitur et circuit omnes categorias". Thomas Aquinas, *De malo*, q. 1, a. 1 ad 11 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXIII, p. 7): "(…) quedam vero sunt equiuoca, sicut bonum, quod circuit omnia genera sicut ens". Cf. id., *Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus in communi*, q. un., a. 2 ad 8 (ed. P. A. Odetto, in: *S. Thomae Aquinatis Quaestiones disputatae*, Vol. 2, Turin – Rome 1949, p. 712): "(…) in transcendentibus, quae circumeunt omne ens".

[56] Francis of Meyronnes, *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, a. 1 (ed. Möhle, pp. 107–108): "Sed contra istud arguitur tum (…) quia nihil est in deo nisi transcendentia (*lege*: transcendens)—secundum beatum Dionysium De Divinis Nominibus (…). Ideo dico

standing, according to which the negation of categorial determination is a sufficient condition of transcendentality. The separation of transcendentality from commonness enables Scotists to include the divine (*transcendens* [1]) in the transcendental domain (*transcendens* [2]).

Roughly contemporaneous is the *Tractatus de sex transcendentibus*, written by the Italian Dominican Francis of Prato (d. after 1345). The treatise is an attempt to systematize the doctrine of the transcendentals on the basis of Thomas's teachings. The number six in the title points to Aquinas's account in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, since in this text six transcendentals are deduced: "being", "thing", "one", "something", "true" and "good". Prato's *Tractatus* does not say anything about the concept of *transcendens*, but starts with the observation that "being" (*ens*), "is the first that is conceived by the intellect and is conceived in the *ratio* of all other *transcendentia*". It deals with them in the order *unum, verum, bonum, aliquid* and *res*.[57] The integration of the last two notions does not seem to be easy, for their treatment is substantially briefer than that of the other transcendentals. The discussion of "one", "true" and "good" is virtually a compilation of texts from Aquinas. The exposition of *bonum*, for instance, consists of literal quotations from *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1–3 and the *Summa theologiae* I, q. 5.

Another attempt at systematization was made by another Italian Dominican, Chrysostomus Javelli (d. 1538), who was master at the University of Bologna ca. 1520. He composed a *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, in the prologue of which he explains his intention. He will encompass the knowledge of the transcendentals, which is as if it were "the door" or "entrance" to the project of metaphysics, in one treatise.[58]

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quod transcendentia sunt illa quae non sunt in aliquo genere determinato, sed abstrahunt ab omni ratione praedicamentali quia omnia talia excedunt praedicamentalem coordinationem".

[57] Francis of Prato, *Tractatus de sex transcendentibus* (ed. B. Mojsisch, in: *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter* 5 (2000), pp. 177–217); *ibid.*, c. I (p. 177): "Ens est primum, quod concipitur intellectus et concipitur in ratione omnium aliorum transcendentium. Sunt autem sex, quae dicuntur 'transcendentia', scilicet ens [c. I, ll. 5–199], unum [c. II, ll. 200–388], verum [c. III, ll. 389–582], bonum [c. IV, ll. 583–957], aliquid [c. V. ll. 959–970] et res [c. VI, ll. 971–995]".

[58] Chrysostomus Javelli, *Tractatus de transcendentibus praeuius Metaphysices* (ed. Lyon 1580, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. I, pp. 458a–469b); *ibid.*, prol. (p. 458a): "Notitiam de transcendentibus quan veluti ianuam in negocio metaphysico arbitramur, complectemur in uno tractatu, quem dividimus in sex capita. In primo agendum est de Ente. In secundo de Uno. In tertio de Aliquid. In quarto de Re. In quinto de Vero. In sexto de Bono". Cf. M. Tavuzzi, "Chrysostomus Javelli OP (ca. 1470–1538). A Biobibliographical Essay", in: *Angelicum* 67 (1990), pp. 347–378 and 68 (1991), pp. 109–121.

The work was widely spread in the sixteenth century and an important source for the *Disputationes metaphysicae* of Suárez.

The treatise is divided into six chapters: c. 1 deals with "being", c. 2 with "one", c. 3 with "something", c. 4 with "thing", c. 5 with "true", and c. 6 with "good". Javelli does not reflect on the general concept of *transcendens*, but the first chapter contains discussions that are relevant to the doctrine of the transcendentals as a whole and that show the diversity of opinions. A substantial part of the first chapter deals with the divisions of being. One of them is "the division of real being into the five transcendentals". The presented division is highly questionable, because "being" itself is a transcendental and not a more general notion than the five other transcendentals. What Javelli means is the question how the five other transcendentals *unum, aliquid, res, verum* and *bonum* are distinguished from "being" (*ens*), since they are not synonymous. In his reply, he formulates three conclusions: they are not distinguished *realiter* from "being"—a conclusion in which "all metaphysicians agree"; they are not distinguished *ex natura rei*—a conclusion directed against the "author" of this distinction, Duns Scotus; they are distinguished *ratione* from "being"—a conclusion in line with the Thomistic orientation of the treatise.[59]

The expositions in the three treatises *De transcendentibus* are somewhat disappointing, insofar as they do not place the doctrine of the transcendentals in a broader philosophical context. There are some short suggestions in that direction, for instance, when Javelli states that knowledge of the transcendentals is "the entrance" to the project of metaphysics, but he does not elaborate this observation. The innovative importance of the idea of transcendentality can only be understood in connection with ontological positions—another understanding of metaphysics than as a philosophy of the transcendent—and epistemological structures—the cognitive priority of the *transcendentia*; they are the *prima*, the first conceptions of the intellect.

[59] Chrysostomus Javelli, *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, c. 1 (ed. Lyon 1580, pp. 462b–463a).

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONDITIONS, PRESUPPOSITIONS AND SOURCES OF A DOCTRINE OF THE TRANSCENDENTALS

What are the philosophical presuppositions and the historical conditions of a doctrine of the transcendentals? As we have seen in chapter I, the medieval accounts understand the notion of *transcendens* in terms of a semantic transcendence: because of their predicative commonness transcendentals surpass the highest genera and the categories signified by these genera. A transcendental philosophy presupposes a conception of First Philosophy, which recognizes the limits of Aristotle's categorial ontology and intends a *transcensus*, a transcending movement towards being in general. This condition was to a large extent absent in the *aetas Boetiana* of Latin philosophy.

2.1 The *aetas Boetiana*

In the twelfth century Peter Abelard honored Boethius as the "greatest philosopher of the Latins" (*maximus philosophus Latinorum*).[1] A modern historian might think that Abelard is, as usual, exaggerating, but his description is not inappropriate when the addition "of the Latins" is taken into account. Boethius saw it as his mission to make the treasures of Greek philosophy accessible to the West. To that end he formulated an ambitious program: the translation of the complete works of Plato and Aristotle into Latin.[2] Although he accomplished only a fraction of this project, Boethius nevertheless laid the foundations of medieval, that is, Latin philosophy. Intellectual life from 500 until 1200 was marked by his translations, commentaries, textbooks as well as his personal writings, such as the *Opuscula sacra* ("Short

[1] Peter Abelard, *Theologia 'Scholarium'*, I, n. 199 (ed. E. M. Buytaert / C. J. Mews, in: *Opera theologica*, Vol. III, Turnhout 1987 (Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis, 13), p. 404).

[2] See the program in Boethius's *In librum Aristotelis Peri hermeneias commentarii, editio secunda* (ed. K. Meiser, Vol. 2, Leipzig 1880, p. 79).

theological works") and the *Consolation of Philosophy*. This age can therefore be called the *aetas Boetiana*.[3]

Metaphysics without the Metaphysics

1. A distinctive feature of this era is the limited corpus of philosophical works that was available. Its core was Boethius's translations of and commentaries on just two logical writings of Aristotle, the *Categoriae* and *De interpretatione* (the so-called *logica vetus*). The philosophical corpus in the *aetas Boetiana* is thus characterized by serious lacunas, of which the absence of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is the most remarkable one.[4] A first and rather incomplete translation, the *translatio Vetustissima*, did not appear until the middle of the twelfth century. The absence of the *Metaphysics* is the first fact to be taken into account, when one examines the conditions for developing a transcendental way of thought. The effect was not that there was no metaphysics at all in the Boethian age, but that these reflections lacked the framework of a scientific discipline and ignored the ambivalence of Aristotle's conception.

2. Boethius expresses his view of metaphysics in his work *De trinitate*, in which he seeks a rational understanding of the Christian teaching that God is triune "from the deepest disciplines of philosophy".[5] In line with the methodological principle that a thing must be considered in a way that is suited to it, Boethius presents the threefold division of theoretical philosophy into physics, mathematics and theology, which goes back to the sixth book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. The distinctive feature of theology is that it studies what is not in motion and what is "abstract", that is, separated from matter. Its object is the immaterial substance of God.[6] Boethius transmitted the Neoplatonic, theological

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[3] The expression was suggested by M.-D. Chenu, *La théologie au douzième siècle*, Paris ³1976 (Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale, 45), pp. 142–158, who, however, restricts its application to the twelfth century. For Boethius's philosophical importance, cf. J. Marenbon, *Boethius*, Oxford 2003.

[4] Cf. A. de Libera, "Genèse et structure des métaphysiques médiévales", in: J.-M. Narbonne / L. Langlois (eds.), *La métaphysique. Son histoire, sa critique, ses enjeux*, Paris – Québec 1999 (Collection Zêtêsis. Série "Textes et essais", 1), pp. 159–181, in particular p. 161. He distinguishes two ages in medieval metaphysics, "the Boethian age" and the "Arabic-Latin age" after the second entrée of Aristotle.

[5] Boethius, *De sancta trinitate*, prol. (ed. C. Moreschini, in: *De consolatione philosophiae—Opuscula theologica*, Munich-Leipzig 2000 (Bibliotheca Teubneriana), p. 166): "(…) ex intimis sumpta philosophiae disciplinis".

[6] *Ibid.*, c. 2 (pp. 168–169).

conception of First Philosophy to the Middle Ages: it is the highest discipline in the order of sciences, because it deals with the divine form which is pure form. Metaphysics is the philosophy of the transcendent.

Porphyry's Isagoge: *Equivocity of being*

Boethius included in his translation project the "Introduction" (*Isagoge*) to Aristotle's *Categories*, in which Porphyry elaborated a systematic account of the five predicables. In order to understand the Aristotelian doctrine of the categories, it is—according to Porphyry—necessary to know what *genus, species, differentia, proprium* and *accidens* are.[7] In every predicament there is a most general genus (*genus generalissimum*) that does not have a superior genus (*superveniens genus*), because it is the highest and first principle. The connection between the logical doctrine of the predicables and Aristotle's ontology of the categories or predicaments becomes manifest when Porphyry wonders whether there is not a more universal predicable than the ten highest genera: Is "being" not said of everything?

But Porphyry points to a dissimilarity between "genealogies" and the order of the "genera". In the case of genealogies, one, for the most part, ascends to one (common) origin (*archè*)—say to Iupiter—, whereas in the case of genera this is not so. For being (*ens*) is not one common genus for all things, as Aristotle says. Without doubt Porphyry refers to Aristotle's thesis "Being is not a genus" in book III of the *Metaphysics* (see 2.3.2). This claim has a purely negative meaning for Porphyry; the universality of being does not contribute anything to our knowledge of what something is. He emphasizes the primordial diversity of things in Aristotle's understanding of reality: "One has rather to posit, as in the *Categories*, the ten first genera as the ten first principles".[8]

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[7] Porphyry, *Isagoge*, *Translatio Boethii* (ed. L. Minio-Paluello, in: Aristoteles latinus, Vol. I/6–7, Paris – Bruges 1966, p. 5).

[8] *Ibid.*, c. 2, 10 (pp. 11–12): "Sed in familiis quidem plerumque ad unum reducuntur principium, verbi gratia Iovem, in generibus autem et speciebus non se sic habet; neque enim est commune unum genus omnium ens, nec omnia eiusdem generis sunt secundum unum supremum genus, quemadmodum dicit Aristoteles. Sed sint posita (quemadmodum in Praedicamentis) prima decem genera quasi prima decem principia".

What kind of predicable is "being", if it is not a genus? Porphyry observes that when all things are called "being", the term is said equivocally (*aequivoce*), not univocally (*univoce*). Unlike Aristotle, he relates the multiplicity of "being" to the classification of the relationships between names, concepts and things in the first chapter of the *Categories*. "Being" belongs to the "homonyms", which according to Aristotle's explanation are things that have a common name, but a different definition (*ratio*) corresponding to that name. Since being is not a common genus and the first principles are ten, there is only commonness (*communio*) according to the name 'being'.[9] Porphyry holds the equivocity of being in a radical manner.

This short passage from Porphyry's *Isagoge* dominated the ontological discourse in the Boethian age. Both his claims—that of the primordial diversity of things and that of the equivocity of "being"—reveal a horizon different from a transcendental perspective. They are in fact incompatible with fundamental presuppositions concerning the predicability and conceptual unity of the transcendentals. The doctrine does not deny the categorial diversity of things, but does not consider "being" or other transgeneric predicates for that reason as philosophically irrelevant; on the contrary, they express common basic features of things. Another presupposition is the recognition that the concept of being, although not univocal, nevertheless possesses a certain unity.

"Boethian transcendentals"

Yet there are elements in the Boethian tradition that were assimilated in the thirteenth-century doctrine of the transcendentals. In a number of instructive studies, Luisa Valente has pointed to some anticipations or "proto-theories".[10] There seems to be "Boethian transcendentals", for

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[9] *Ibid.* (p. 12): "Vel, si omnia quis entia vocet, aequivoce (inquit) nuncupabit, non univoce; si enim unum esset commune omnium genus ens, univoce entia dicerentur, cum autem decem sint prima, communio secundum nomen est solum, non etiam secundum definitionis rationem quae secundum nomen est".

[10] L. Valente, "'Illa quae transcendunt generalissima': Elementi per una storia latina dei termini trascendentali (XII secolo)", in: C. Esposito / P. Porro (eds.), *Metaphysica, sapientia, scientia divina. Soggetto e statuto della filosofia prima nel Medioevo. Atti del Convegno della Società Italiana per lo Studio del Pensiero Medievale, Bari, 9–12 giugno 2004*, Turnhout 2005 (Quaestio, 5), pp. 217–239. Id., "'Ens, unum, bonum'. Elementi per una storia dei trascendentali in Boezio e nella tradizione boeziana del XII secolo", in: S. Carotti / R. Imbach / Z. Kałuża / G. Stabile / L. Sturlese (eds.), *"Ad Ingenii Acuitionem". Studies in Honor of Alfonso Maierù*, Louvain-la-Neuve 2006 (Textes et Etudes du Moyen Age, 38),

he maintains the convertibility of "being" and "one"; his explication of the relation between *ens* and *bonum* in the treatise *De hebdomadibus* played a role in the formation of the theory, and in his *Consolation of Philosophy*, Boethius expresses the transcendental status of "one" and "good". It is also true that in logical works of the twelfth century the distinct semantic nature of a group of transgeneric terms was recognized. At the same time, however, one must notice the limitations of that recognition.

1. Boethius not only translated Porphyry's *Isagoge*, but also commented upon this work twice. In his widely-used second commentary, he advances an additional argument for the claim that "being" cannot be the common genus of the predicaments, which is noteworthy from the perspective of the history of the transcendentals. He introduces the notion of "one", probably inspired by Aristotle's statement (*Metaph.* III, c. 3, 998b 22) that neither "being" nor "one" are genera even if they "are said of everything that exists". Boethius argues that there can only be two genera of the same species, if one genus is subordinated to the other. If they are so equal to one another that one genus is not subordinated to the other, they cannot be genera of the same species. Now "one" (*unum*), like "being", is said of all categories and is not subordinated to "being". "Being" and "one" are rather convertible with one another: Whatever we call "being" is "one", and conversely what is called "one" is "being". That means that, if "being" were the genus of all things, there would be another common genus, namely the "one", which is, however, impossible.[11]

In his commentary on Porphyry, Boethius uses the idea of the convertibility of "being" and "one" to a negative end, *i.e.* to demonstrate that "being" cannot be a genus. The effect of the argument, however, is not purely negative. The transgeneric domain is extended to another notion: every being is one. But the intrinsic relation between them remains unclear: is "one" a property of "being", since in the Porphyrian order of the predicables convertibility is the characteristic feature of the *proprium*?

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pp. 482–544. Id., "Names That Can Be Said of Everything: Porphyrian Tradition and 'Transcendental' Terms in Twelfth-Century Logic", in: *Vivarium* 45 (2007), pp. 298–310.

[11] Boethius, *In Porphyrii Isagogen commenta*, *editio secunda*, III, c. 7 (ed. S. Brandt, Wien – Leipzig 1906 (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, 48), p. 224).

The positive potential of the idea of the convertibility of "being" and "one" already becomes visible in one of Boethius's theological treatises, in which he appeals to the idea in the controversy about Christology. He criticizes Nestorius's teaching that there are two persons in Christ, a human and a divine person, because this duplicity would imply that Christ is "nothing" at all. "What is not one cannot be at all, because being (*esse*) and one are convertible and whatever is, is one".[12] In the twelfth century, Gilbert of Poitiers, commenting on this passage, establishes that the thesis of the convertibility of "being" and "one" is "a proof (*locus*) of many propositions" and "a proposition known *per se*" for the philosophers.[13]

2. Although the *Metaphysics* was unknown, there was metaphysics in the *aetas Boetiana*.[14] One of Boethius's *Opuscula sacra*, the treatise *De hebdomadibus*, was the starting-point of metaphysical reflections in the Latin world: the work was intensively commented upon in the twelfth century, by Gilbert of Poitiers, Thierry of Chartres, and Clarembald of Arras.[15] The interest of the commentators disappeared after the Boethian age; an exception is Thomas Aquinas, who was the only thirteenth-century author to compose a commentary.

De hebdomadibus addresses the question: "How can substances be good in virtue of the fact that they are (*in eo quod sint*) when they are not substantially good?" The question presupposes, as Boethius observes, *that* beings are good; the problem is rather *how* they are good: by substance or by participation?[16] Because of its central theme, the relation

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[12] Boethius, *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*, c. 4 (ed. Moreschini, p. 220): "Nihil igitur unum, secundum Nestorium, Christus est ac per hoc omnino nihil. Quod enim non est unum, nec esse omnino potest; esse enim atque unum convertitur et quodcumque unum est, est".

[13] Gilbert of Poitiers, *Expositio in Boecii librum contra Euticen et Nestorium* (ed. N. M. Häring, in: *The Commentaries on Boethius*, Toronto 1966 (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Studies and Texts, 13), p. 300). For the impact of the idea of the convertibility on the twelfth century, cf. also J. Marenbon, "Abelard, *ens* and Unity", in: *Topoi* 11 (1992), pp. 149–158.

[14] Cf. A. Speer, "The Hidden Heritage: Boethian Metaphysics and its Medieval Tradition", in: C. Esposito / P. Porro (eds.), *Metaphysica, sapientia, scientia divina. Soggetto e statuto della filosofia prima nel Medioevo. Atti del Convegno della Societa Italiana per lo Studio del Pensiero Medievale, Bari, 9–12 giugno 2004,* Turnhout 2005 (Quaestio, 5), pp. 163–181.

[15] Boethius, *De hebdomadibus* (ed. Moreschini, pp. 186–194). Cf. G. Schrimpf, *Die Axiomenschrift des Boethius* (*De hebdomadibus*) *als philosophisches Lehrbuch des Mittelalters*, Leiden 1966 (Studien zur Problemgeschichte der antiken und mittelalterlichen Philosophie, 2).

[16] Boethius, *De hebdomadibus* (ed. Moreschini, pp. 188–189).

between being and goodness, the treatise will play a role in the formation of the doctrine of the transcendentals in Philip the Chancellor (see ch. 3.3).

De hebdomadibus is also methodologically interesting, because it presents the model of an axiomatic science—a model that intrigued medieval thinkers like Meister Eckhart. Boethius advances nine axioms, on the basis of which the question of the goodness of things will be solved. The first one is not so much an axiom in the strict sense as a general description of the cognitive status of the axioms. It explains that "a common conception of the soul (*communis animi conceptio*) is a statement that anyone approves as he hears it". The second axiom presents an ontological difference, "To be (*esse*) and that which is (*id quod est*) are diverse", to which frequent reference was made in thirteenth-century discussions on the structure of finite beings. Eckhart adopted Boethius's distinction in his Work of Propositions and interpreted the axiom as the expression of the difference between an abstract transcendental noun (*esse*) and its concrete counterpart (see ch. 8.2.2).

The argument in *De hebdomadibus* is complicated;[17] the core of the solution of the difficulty is that the being of things itself is good, since their being has flowed (*fluxit*) from the first good. Things are good insofar as they are, in virtue of their relation to the first good. The final part of the work discusses objections to the proposed solution. One of them suggests that if all things are good because they are from the good, then likewise all things must be just since he who willed them to exist is just. Boethius rejects this idea by claiming that "good" is general (*generale*), whereas "just" is special and a species does not descend into all things. He thus underscores the common extension of the good; all things are good (*omnia bona*).[18]

3. From the perspective of the thirteenth-century doctrine, Boethius is a source of the transcendentality of "one" and "good". A text that confirms their status as "Boethian transcendentals" is his *Consolation of Philosophy*. In the third book, he argues that the one and the good

[17] Cf. S. MacDonald, "Boethius's Claim that All Substances are Good", in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 70 (1988), pp. 245–279.

[18] Boethius, *De hebdomadibus* (ed. Moreschini, p. 194): "Amplius bonum quidem generale est, iustum vero speciale nec species descendit in omnia. Idcirco alia quidem iusta, alia aliud, omnia bona".

are the same on the basis of the principle that "things are of the same essence, if their effects, according to their nature, are not different". The proper effect of the one is to ensure the preservation and permanence of things. "Everything that is endures and subsists so long as it is one, and perishes and is destroyed as soon as it ceases to be one".[19] That this effect is likewise the effect of the good is apparent from the universal striving for self-preservation. "All things that are desire naturally to continue their subsistence and to avoid harm". But that which seeks to subsist desires to be one. Therefore, all things desire unity (*omnia unum desiderant*). This universal finality is at the same time the desire for the good, because the good can be described as that which all things desire.[20]

Aquinas, in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 2, quotes this text of Boethius, but gives it a different import. Boethius's argument of the universal striving for self-preservation is used as an indication not of the convertibility of the one and the good, but of that of *being* and the good. All that already exists loves its own being and preserves it with all its strength. Therefore, being itself (*ipsum esse*) has the character of the good. When Henry of Ghent, in his *Summa*, deals with the property "one" (*unum*), he refers to two texts of Boethius that prove its transcendental status, namely the commentary on Porphyry and the *Consolation*.[21]

4. Logical treatises of the twelfth century show an awareness of the special semantic nature of certain transcategorial terms.[22] In the *Ars Meliduna*, an important logical tract from the second half of the twelfth century, they are distinguished from universals. "No term that suits every thing, such as *res, aliquid, ens* and *unum*, signifies a universal". What is notable in this list is the inclusion of *res* and *aliquid*. Both terms were incorporated in the thirteenth-century doctrine

[19] Boethius, *Consolatio philosophiae*, III, prosa 11 (ed. Moreschini, p. 87).

[20] *Ibid.* (p. 90). Cf. C. Steel, "L'un et le bien. Les raisons d'une identification dans la tradition platonicienne", in: *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 73 (1989), pp. 69–85.

[21] Henry of Ghent, *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum*, a. 25, q. 1 (ed. L. Badius, Paris 1520, Vol. I [reprinted in St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1953], fol. 147vB): "Dicit enim Boethius super Porphyrium quod omne quod est, ideo est quia unum est, et De consolatione: Omne quod est tamdiu manet atque consistit quamdiu unitatem retinet".

[22] The relevant texts were examined by K. Jacobi, "*Nomina transcendentia*. Untersuchungen von Logikern des 12. Jahrhunderts über transkategoriale Terme", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, Berlin – New York 2003 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 30), pp. 23–36. See also the cited studies of L. Valente.

of the transcendentals and are mostly traced back to the influence of Arab philosophy (Avicenna), but, if the dating of the treatise is correct, there must be a native Latin tradition with respect to these terms. The features of the names "that suits every thing" remain mainly negative: they do not signify a universal because they cannot signify a genus—the text refers to Aristotle, but this reference has evidently been taken from Porphyry's *Isagoge*—and are to be distinguished from the categories, which determine *what* something is; these names, on the contrary, only signify *that* it is.[23]

The distinctive nature of transcategorial terms is also put forward in the much debated question concerning "indefinite names" (*nomina infinita*). *Nomen infinitum* is the translation of Aristotle's designation for expressions, which arise by the addition of the particle "not" (*non*) to a name, for instance, *non-homo*.[24] The added negation brings about that that which was originally signified by the name is excluded from its meaning; what is positively named remains completely open and is thus "indefinite". Logical treatises raise the question what types of names can be made indefinite. This discussion leads to a distinction between finite terms on the one hand and terms that "contain all things" (*omnia continentes*) and do not possess definiteness on the other. For that reason the latter cannot be made indefinite; *res* and *aliquid* are again mentioned as such names.[25]

In the so-called *Dialectica Monacensis*, certain terms are explicitly identified as *nomina transcendentia* in the context of a discussion on the equivocity of names. The anonymous author distinguishes different kinds; one type of equivocation arises when a word signifies one thing primarily and another secondarily (*per posterius*), for instance, "healthy" said of "animal" and of "urine". The author adds that all equivocations that concern the *nomina transcendentia* are reduced to this type. He lists names like "thing", "being", "one", "universal", "possible", contingent", "the same" and "diverse" as such.[26] The treatise is

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[23] *Ars Meliduna*, II (cited from K. Jacobi, "*Nomina transcendentia*", p. 27, Nt. 22): "Nullum nomen conveniens cuilibet rei significat universale, ut 'res', 'aliquid', 'ens' et 'unum'. Genus enim, quod magis videretur, significare non possunt, ne sit unum commune genus omnium, quod prohibet Aristoteles; praeterea assignatione sua non ostenditur de aliquo quid ipsum sit, sed simpliciter quod sit".

[24] Aristotle, *Peri hermeneias*, I, c. 2, 16a 24–31.

[25] K. Jacobi, "*Nomina transcendentia*", pp. 23–26.

[26] *Dialectica Monacensis* (ed. L. M. de Rijk, in: *Logica Modernorum. A Contribution to the History of Early Terminist Logic*, Vol. II/2, Assen 1967, pp. 560–561): "Si ergo fit [equivocatio] ratione significationis, hoc potest esse tribus modis: (…) (ii) aut unum

dated to the first quarter of the thirteenth century; its use of *transcendentia* constitutes—as we have seen in the first chapter—one of the earliest known appearances of the new sense of the term.

In their inquiry into universals, their discussion of *nomina infinita* and that of the equivocity of names, logicians recognize the distinctive semantic nature of *nomina transcendentia*. However, their treatises do not offer a systematic account of the relation of the transcendentals to one another. What is also absent is any link with metaphysical considerations, such as the metaphysics of "the good" in *De hebdomadibus*. A doctrine of the transcendentals is not to be found in the logical treatises of the Boethian age.

Equivocity revised

Porphyry's claim of the equivocity of being was relativized in some respects during the Boethian age, but not really challenged. Different senses of equivocity, a strict one and a wide one, were distinguished as well as a mode of predication proper to "transcendental" names.

1. In his Commentary on the *Categories*, Boethius presents a differentiation of the equivocals on the basis of a teaching by Porphyry himself.[27] Boethius distinguishes between what is equivocal "by chance" (*a casu*) and what is equivocal "by deliberation" (*a consilio*). In the first kind of equivocation, it is a mere coincidence that different things have received the same name, as when both the son of Priam and Alexander the Great are called "Alexander". What is equivocal *a consilio*, however, is intended by the human will; it is an ordered multiplicity, in which the equivocals possess some kind of unity. Boethius lists four types of "deliberate" equivocity, which are derived from texts in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Ethics* (see 2.3.3). (i) The attribution of a common name is sometimes based on a similarity (*secundum similitudinem*), for instance, both a painted man and a real man can be called "animal"—Aristotle's example of an equivocal term in the *Categories*. (ii) Sometimes the attribution is based on a proportion

principaliter, reliquum per posterius (…). Ad hunc [secundum modum] reducuntur omnes equivocationes que sunt circa nomina transcendentia. Qualia sunt hec: 'res', 'ens', 'unum', 'universale', 'possibile', 'contingens', 'idem', 'diversum', et similia".

[27] On Porphyry's doctrine of homonymy, see the discussion of C. Luna in: *Simplicius' Commentaire sur les Catégories*, transl. and commented upon under the direction of I. Hadot, Fasc. III: *Préambule aux Catégories*, Leiden – New York 1990 (Philosophia Antiqua, 51), pp. 82–83.

(*secundum proportionem*), e.g., "principle" said of number is unity and said of line is point. (iii) The equivocation can also occur because things proceed from one thing (*ab uno*): an example is the term "medicinal", which is used of instruments and potions, since they descend from the art of medicine. (iv) Finally an equivocation can occur because things are related to one end (*ad unum*): in this sense both food and exercise are called "healthy".[28] Equivocity in the wider sense, however, remains a case of equivocity. A third type of relationship, intermediate between equivocity and univocity, was not posited during the Boethian age.

2. The observations on transcendental terms in logical treatises influenced the theological discourse at the end of the twelfth century. Discussing the question whether names that are said of God and creatures are *aequivoca* or *univoca*, two anonymous *Summae* present distinctions that are both terminologically and doctrinally interesting.[29] In the *Summa*, of which the *incipit* reads *Breves dies hominis*, a distinction between the *nomina quae transcendunt generalissima* and the *praedicamentalia* is introduced. The "transcendental" names, such as *ens, aliquid, unum*, are predicated of God and creature univocally, the "predicamental" names, however, are said equivocally.[30] In another *Summa*, the so-called *Summa Huberti* (probably written ca. 1195–1200), reference is made to some people who follow a "middle position" between univocity and equivocity, because they are of the opinion that the *suprapredicamentalia* are said univocally, but the *predicamentalia* are said equivocally. The author himself endorses the equivocity of the categorial names, but leaves the question as to the *suprapredicamentalia* open.[31] In both *Summae* we see the tendency to distinguish

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[28] Boethius, *In Categorias Aristotelis libri quatuor*, I (ed. J.-P. Migne, in: *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. 64, Paris 1891, col. 166B).

[29] L. Valente, "Aequivoca oder Univoca? Die essentiellen Namen in der Trinitätstheologie des späten 12. und frühen 13. Jahrhunderts", in: D. Perler / U. Rudolph (eds.), *Logik und Theologie, Das 'Organon' im arabischen und im lateinischen Mittelalter*, Leiden-Boston 2005 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 84), pp. 305–330, in particular pp. 321–322.

[30] *Summa Breves dies hominis* (quoted according to L. Valente, "*Aequivoca* oder *Univoca?*", p. 321): "Dicimus nomina illa que transcendunt generalissima non significare aliquod predicamentale vel esse data ex forma sed sola contenta sunt appellatione unde similiter conveniunt creatori et creature. Secus autem est de illis vocibus quibus predicamentalia designantur. Illa enim aliter de deo et aliter de creatura dicuntur".

[31] Hubertus, *Summa 'Colligite fragmenta'* (quoted according to R. Heinzmann, *Die Summe 'Colligite Fragmenta' des Magister Hubertus (Clm 28799). Ein Beitrag zur theologischen Systembildung in der Scholastik*, München – Paderborn – Wien 1974 (Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes, 24), p. 179, Nt. 21): "Quidam vero

the mode of predicating proper to "transcendental" names from the mode proper to the predicamental terms and in both works the distinction is restricted to the alternative "univocity" or "equivocity".

The absence of the '*Metaphysics*', Boethius's conception of First Philosophy as the philosophy of the transcendent, Porphyry's claims of the primordial diversity of things and of the equivocity of being: from these features it is evident that the conditions for a transcendental way of thought were lacking in the *aetas Boetiana*. It is true that some texts in Boethius's work suggest the transcendentality of "one" and "good", and that in logical treatises of the twelfth century the distinct semantic nature of a group of transgeneric terms was recognized, but after all there is no systematic doctrine of the transcendentals in the Boethian age.

2.2 Change of perspective in the thirteenth century

A transcendental way of thought is not possible until the metaphysical perspective of the *aetas Boetiana* is transformed and the Porphyrian claims that dominated the ontological discourse are modified. This process took place in the thirteenth century. The transformation of the Porphyrian-Boethian perspective can be illustrated by two texts, the logical commentaries of Albert the Great and the anonymous work *De natura generis*.

Albert the Great's logical commentaries

1. Albert the Great is a key figure in the medieval reception of Aristotle; he composed commentaries on the entire *corpus Aristotelicum*. Instructive for the change of perspective is his commentary on Porphyry's treatise, called *De quinque universalibus* (ca. 1251/2). Albert dwells on Porphyry's objection to the idea that a *genus generalissimum* does not have a higher genus: There is something higher than and prior to substance, namely "being" (*ens*), for every substance is a

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quasi media via incedentes dixerunt suprapredicamentalia deo et creaturis convenire univoce eo scilicet quod inventa sunt ad significandam rem quamlibet quaecumque umquam potest excogitari. Sed praedicamentalia aequivoce et non univoce deo et creaturis asserebant convenire. Quia vero tutior et sanior videtur haec opinio dicatur quod aequivoce, de suprapraedicamentalibus in dubio relinquentes".

being, but not every being is a substance. Albert adds to this objection that what applies to "being", likewise holds true for any determination that transcends the genera (*genera transcendit*), such as *res, unum* and *aliquid*. This addition suggests that a plurality of transgeneric terms is an established fact.[32]

In comparison to Porphyry, a new element is that Albert, in his reply, emphasizes the distinctive predicability of transcendental terms. They are not predicated of substance through a *praedicatio generis*, because they are not said according to one meaning (*ratio*), but are predicated "according to priority and posteriority" (*per prius et posterius*) and through a *praedicatio principii*. In support of this view Albert refers to "Avicenna, Alfarabi, Algazel and *omnes Arabes*"—a reference that reflects the broadening of the philosophical horizon in the thirteenth century.[33]

The Arab thinkers prove the non-generic character of "being" through an onto-logical argument quite different from Aristotle's argument for the thesis that being is not a genus: If *homo* is, it follows that *animal* is, if *animal* is, that *vivum* is, if *vivum* is, that *corpus* is, and if *corpus* is, that *substantia* is, because in "the Porphyrian tree" of universals ("man" > "animal" > "something living" > "body" > "substance") the concept of a genus is always implied in that of the species. It does not follow, however, that, if *substantia* is, *ens* is. Why is that the case, since in the initial objection it was stated that "every substance is a being"? The reason is that "being" surpasses the conceptual reduction within the categorial order. It signifies "what exists in act", and existence does not belong to the essential structure of something.[34]

2. Albert also modifies Porphyry's claim of the "equivocity" of being and points to a certain unity in its concept. The predicate "being"

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[32] Albert the Great, *Super Porphyrium De V universalibus*, tract. "De specie", c. 3 (ed. M. Santos Noya, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. I/1a, Münster 2004, p. 64): "Si quis autem instet et dicat quod substantia habet superius; ens enim est ante substantiam per intellectum, quia omnis substantia est ens, sed non omne ens est substantia. (…); et similiter potest obici de quolibet quod genera transcendit, ut est res, unum et aliquid".

[33] *Ibid.*: "(…) hic autem ad praesens hoc sufficiat, quod cum ens praedicatur de substantia, vel res vel unum vel aliquid, non praedicatur praedicatione generis, cum non sit una ratione praedicatum de his de quibus praedicatur, sed per prius et posterius; sed talia praedicantur praedicatione principii, non generis. Et hoc probant Avicenna et Alfarabius et Algazel et omnes Arabes sic".

[34] *Ibid.* Cf. Algazel, *Logica*, c. 3 (ed. C. H. Lohr, in: *Traditio* 21 (1965), pp. 249–250): "Esse vero accidentale est, non essentiale. Genus autem intelligitur quod est essentiale communius".

is not *simpliciter aequivocum*, for all that is absolutely equivocal is, according to Boethius, "equivocal by chance". But the concept of being has an ordered multiplicity, for all of which being is said is related to one thing, that is being in the proper sense. Being is rather *analogum*, that is, common according to a proportion, which stands midway (*medium*) between univocal and equivocal.[35] The idea of the analogy of being presupposes, in comparison to the account in the opening chapter of Aristotle's *Categories*, a new "topics" of the relations between names, concepts and things, in which—in addition to "equivocity" and "univocity"—"analogy" is the third possibility. The formation of the medieval doctrine of analogy is, as Albert's writings illustrate, a complex story, based on the reading and exegesis of a variety of texts from the tradition: Aristotle (see 2.3.3), Neoplatonism (see 2.5: Dionysius the Areopagite), Boethius (his differentiation of the equivocals) and Arab philosophy (see 2.4.2).

Already in the first treatise of his commentary on Porphyry, Albert had mentioned the analogous terms and observed that *analoga* are called *convenientia* by the Arabs. He does not specify the authors he has in mind, but a text that had an obvious influence on his account was the *Logic* of Algazel. Albert ascribes the features Algazel had attributed to the *convenientia* to analogous terms such as "being": *analoga* stand "midway" between *univoca* and *equivoca*. They are imposed on ontologically diverse things with respect to one thing (*ad unum*) to which they have a proportion; "being", for instance, is primarily and principally said of substance, and secondarily of an accident, since this is "something of a being".[36] It has been suggested that the first medieval theory of analogy is found in this text.[37] In the next chapters it must be proved whether this assertion is historically correct. From a doctrinal point of view we have to note that a typical feature of the

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[35] Albert the Great, *Super Porphyrium De V universalibus*, tract. "De specie", c. 5 (ed. Santos Noya, p. 69): "Tamen quia in talibus respectus est ad unum quod est simpliciter ens, ideo non simpliciter est aequivocum. (…) Et ideo totum simul 'analogum', hoc est commune secundum proportionem, vocatur, quod 'medium est inter aequivocum'—quod simpliciter, ut dicit Boethius, a casu et fortuna aequivocum est—, 'et univocum'".

[36] Albert the Great, *Super Porphyrium De V universalibus*, tract. "De antecendentibus ad logicam", c. 5 (ed. Santos Noya, p. 11): "*Analoga* autem sive proportionaliter dicta sive, ut Arabes dicunt, '*convenientia* sunt media inter univoca et aequivoca', quae sunt imposita diversis secundum esse et substantiam per respectum ad unum, cui proportionantur, 'sicut ens, quod dicitur de substantia' primo et principaliter 'et de accidente' secundario, quia est aliquid entis".

[37] Cf. A. de Libera, "Les sources gréco-arabes de la théorie médiévale de l'analogie de l'être", in: *Les Etudes philosophiques* 3–4 (1989), pp. 319–345, here p. 330.

medieval theory is the idea of a *duplex analogia*, but that Albert's text is only concerned with analogy at the level of categorial multiplicity, not with the "theological" analogy.

3. In his commentary on the *Categories*, Albert highlights the limits of the categorial order in two respects. First, the reduction of all predicables to the ten predicaments or most general genera only applies to universals predicated of subjects. If there is something that is not predicated of anything as a universal, this is not in any of the genera. It is before them (*ante haec*), namely God, who surpasses all things (*excedens omnia*) and as the *causa prima* is the cause of eveything.[38] Moreover, some things are not reducible to one determinate genus, but are in every genus, like *ens, unum, res* and *aliquid.* They are not called "genera", but are rather principles of these genera and are called, as Albert elsewhere states, *transcendentia*.[39] Both God and the transcendentals exceed the boundaries of the categorial order, although in different manners: God, because he is not in any genus but is beyond all things (*transcendens*[1]); the transcendentals, because they are common to the categories (*transcendens*[2]). How that which is transcendent is related to what is transcendental is a question that Albert discusses in his metaphysical commentaries (see ch. 5.4).

The treatise De natura generis

This anonymous treatise has (wrongly) been attributed to Thomas Aquinas, but the question of its authorship or originality is irrelevant to our purpose; we are interested in the work as an expression of the philosophical innovations of its time.[40] The author makes a number of statements that are typical of the changed perspective.

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[38] Albert the Great, *Liber De praedicamentis*, tract. I, c. 7 (ed. Borgnet, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. 1, Paris 1890, p. 164): "Notandum igitur est quod iste numerus [*sc.* generum] non est nisi praedicabilium, quae ut universalia de subjectis praedicantur. Propter quod si aliquid est quod de nullo praedicatur ut universale (…), illud non est in aliquo istorum generum, sed ante haec, et causa omnium istorum, sicut causa prima, Deus scilicet excedens omnia (…)".

[39] *Ibid.*: "Sunt iterum quaedam non ad unum genus reducibilia, sed sunt in omnibus, sicut ens, et unum, et res, et aliquid, quae dicuntur non genera, sed ut principia quaedam per prius et posterius de generibus illis dicta".

[40] The writing has been edited among the works of Thomas Aquinas, in: *Opuscula philosophica* (ed. R. M. Spiazzi, Turin-Rome 1954, pp. 177–204). On the question of authenticity, cf. L.-J. Bataillon, "[Review of] F. Pelster, "Die Thomas von Aquin zugeschriebenen *Opuscula De instantibus*, *De natura verbi intellectus*, *De principio individuationis*, *De genere*, *De natura accidentis*, *De natura materiae*, *De quatuor*

1. Chapter 1 deals with "being" (*de ente*). This beginning looks strange in a treatise "on the nature of the genus", because, as the author explicitly recognizes in this chapter, "being" is not a genus. But he gives a justification of his procedure which is characteristic of the transcendental approach. His intention is to say something about "genus" and the difficulties related to it. However, an inquiry must start from that to which every understanding of a thing must be reduced. This intellectual starting point is "being" (*ens*), because "being" is the first object (*obiectum primum*) of the intellect. It is the pre-condition of cognition, for something is knowable, only insofar as it is a being in act, as it is said in book IX of the *Metaphysics* (c. 9).[41] The close relation between "being" and the "object" of the intellect is a first sign of a changed philosophical perspective; *obiectum* is a new philosophical term, for it does not appear until the beginning of the thirteenth century.

2. Another innovation in *De natura generis* is the assertion that "analogy" (*analogia*) is found in "being". The author does not explain what "analogy" is, although he mentions casually that a term is said in analogical fashion when it is predicated according to an order of priority and posteriority. The text emphasizes that there is a *duplex analogia* found in being. It is applied to the division of being into substance and the accidents (the "transcendental" analogy), and it is applied to God and the creatures (the "theological" analogy): "being" is primarily said of God and secondarily of the creature, although it is more correct to say, as the author observes with a reference to pseudo-Dionysius, that God is beyond all being (*super omne ens*) rather than that he is a being. This additional remark illustrates a tension within the idea of a twofold analogy: can the analogy that is introduced with respect to the categorial diversity of being also encompass the difference between finite being and the divine being?[42]

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oppositis und ihr Verfasser" [*Gregorianum* 36 (1955), pp. 21–49]", in: *Bulletin thomiste* 10 (1957/1959), pp. 88–90.

[41] (Pseudo-Thomas), *De natura generis*, c. 1, n. 476 (ed. Spiazzi, p. 177): "(…) initium sumentes ab illo ad quod intellectum omnem incipere et resolvere necesse est. Hoc autem dicimus ens; ens namque est obiectum intellectus primum, cum nihil sciri possit nisi secundum quod est ens actu, ut dicitur nono *Metaph.*".

[42] *Ibid.*: "In ente autem sic accepto, duplex analogia reperitur. Dicitur enim ens de Deo et creatura, sed per prius de Deo, et per posterius de creatura; licet verius sit Deum esse super omne ens, quam esse ens, sicut dicit Dionysius et Damascenus. Propter hanc tamen analogiam non sequitur ens esse prius utroque, Deo scilicet et creatura, sicut prius est ens substantia et accidente, de quibus analogice dicitur".

3. "Being" cannot be a genus, as Aristotle teaches in his *Metaphysics*, because there is no difference that participates in the genus. But there is no difference whose concept does not include "being". It is therefore evident that being cannot have differences, such as a genus has. Hence being is not a genus. But the author of *De natura generis* goes beyond this negative conclusion. "Being" can commonly be said of all things in an analogical way (*communiter praedicabile analogice*) and is "transcendental", as becomes obvious from the additional remark that something similar applies to the other *transcendentia*.[43] The second chapter of *De natura generis* deals with the six transcendentals *ens, res, aliquid, unum, verum*, and *bonum*, and determines their relations: they are really identical, but differ conceptually (*ratione*). "Being" is the first known, all other concepts add something to "being". But in this respect there is a fundamental distinction between *praedicamenta* and *transcendentia*. The predicaments add a special *ratio*, the transcendentals a mode that is coextensive (*in aequo*) with being.[44]

The treatise gives a systematic deduction of the transcendentals, which bears great similarity to Aquinas's account in *De veritate* (see ch. 6.1), but deviates from it at some salient points. The deduction is based on the various modes of addition to "being", the first transcendental. The main distinction is between the addition concerning being in itself (*absolute*) and the one concerning being in relation to something else (*comparatum ad aliquid*). The addition to being in itself can be affirmative or negative. If affirmative, one again has to distinguish between two modes. If the affirmative addition concerns that through which something is, it is what *unum* adds to "being", because "one" signifies indivision and a thing is through nothing else than through indivision; everything, insofar as it is, is undivided.[45] If the affirmative addition concerns that which has being, it is what *res* adds to "being".

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[43] *Ibid.*, n. 477 (pp. 177–178): "Et ideo ens genus non est, sed est de omnibus communiter praedicabile analogice. Similiter dicendum est de aliis transcendentibus".

[44] *Ibid.*, c. 2, n. 478 (p. 178): "Sunt autem sex transcendentia, videlicet ens, res, aliquid, unum, verum, bonum: quae re idem sint, sed ratione distinguuntur"; *ibid.*, n. 479 (p. 178): "Supra ens igitur quod additur, si dicit aliquam specialem rationem entis, sicut substantia dicit specialem modum existendi (…) unde quod sic addit supra ens, non potest esse in aequo cum ente. Et isto modo praedicamenta addunt supra ens (…)".

[45] The positive determination of "one" is a clear deviation from Aquinas's position, because his determination in *De veritate* and in his other works is always negative.

If what is added is negative, it is what *aliquid* adds to "being"; *aliquid* literally means "another what" (*aliud quid*), which is the same as "not-this" (*non-hoc*). The relational mode of addition is understood as an addition concerning being in relation to the soul (*anima*), which has a conformity (*convenientia*) with every being—the treatise adopts Aquinas's explication of the relational transcendentals through the idea of a correlation between the human soul and being. In the soul there is a twofold potency, namely, intellect and will, and consequently there are two relational transcendentals. *Verum* adds the *ratio* of knowable to "being", *bonum* adds the *ratio* of desirable.[46]

4. Another statement on "being" in *De natura generis* asserts that *ens*, which is not a genus but transcendental, is "the subject" (*subiectum*) of First Philosophy.[47] This assertion introduces another key notion, expressing the medieval concern with the nature of this discipline, for, as we have seen in the Introduction, "the basic question of metaphysics" in the Middle Ages addresses the proper subject of this science.

In connection with the statement on "being" as the subject of metaphysics, the author establishes a similarity between this discipline and logic. The similarity concerns the universal scope of both sciences and thus presupposes a conception of First Philosophy as "the common science". The text elaborates on Aristotle's remark in his *Metaphysics* (IV, c. 2, 1004b 20) that the logician, like the philosopher, deals with all things. By implication the subject of logic is, just as that of metaphysics, *ens in communi*. But here a problem arises, because two distinct sciences cannot have one and the same *subiectum*. Yet logic and metaphysics are different disciplines, insofar as the being that is the subject of logic is "being of reason" (*ens rationis*), such as the notions of "genus" and "species", and the being that is the subject of metaphysics is "real being" (*ens naturae*). These two domains of being are coextensive (*aequiparantur*), for there is no being in nature that does not fall under the logical consideration of reason.[48]

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[46] (Pseudo-Thomas), *De natura generis*, c. 2, n. 478–481 (ed. Spiazzi, pp. 178–179).

[47] *Ibid.*, c. 3, n. 485 (p. 180): "(…) ens quod est subiectum Philosophiae primae non sit genus".

[48] *Ibid.*, c. 4, n. 486 (p. 180): "Sciendum est ergo quod, sicut in quarto *Metaph.* dicitur, 'Logicus et Metaphysicus circa omnia operantur, differenter tamen'. Sicut enim primi Philosophi est loqui de ente in communi, ita et Logici; aliter non esset 'circa omnia' eius consideratio, nisi haberet pro subiecto ens in communi. Cum enim unius scientiae sit unum subiectum, idem erit subiectum utriusque. Sed differunt: (…) et hoc ideo est, quod ens dupliciter dicitur, scilicet naturae et rationis. Ens autem ratio-

Conclusion

Like Albert's logical commentaries, the treatise *De natura generis* documents fundamental changes of perspective in comparison to the Boethian age and the emergence of a transcendental way of thought in the thirteenth century. (i) The presence of the *Metaphysics* is manifest through references in the treatise. Metaphysics is conceived, not as the philosophy of the transcendent but as the "common science", of which "being" is the "proper subject". (ii) Porphyry's claim of the equivocity of being is modified: "Being" and the other *transcendentia* are said of all things in an "analogical" fashion; the medieval "invention" of analogy sees unity in the diversity of things. (iii) That "being" is not a genus does not mean that it is without significance. On the contrary, "being" is the condition of intellectual knowledge; it is the first "object"of the intellect—an important epistemological innovation. (iv) Being is transcendental, an idea that presupposes the acknowledgement of the limits of the categorial order. A systematic account of the transcendentals appears in the thirteenth century.

Sources

Medieval authors were conscious of the fact that different traditions of thought influenced the genesis and development of the doctrine of the transcendentals. Albert the Great is an important witness in this respect. In one of his expositions of the transcendentals, he opposes the *philosophus*, who recognized the transcendentality of "being" and "one", but did not see "true" and "good" as "dispositions concomitant with every being", to the *sancti* (see. ch. 5.2). The "philosopher" stands not only for Aristotle but also for Avicenna—the phrase "dispositions concomitant with every being" is Avicennian; in his logical commentaries Albert more than once refers to the *Arabes*. Referring to the "saints" he primarily means Dionysius the Areopagite. These three authors are the main sources for the medieval doctrine of the transcendentals. Hence, in the next sections, we will consider the reception of Aristotle, Avicenna and Dionysius the Areopagite. One could wonder whether another Christian thinker, Augustine, should not be included. It is true that his thought had some influence on the

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nis (…) est subiectum Logicae, et illud ens aequiparatur enti naturae quia nihil est in rerum natura, de quo ratio non negotietur".

initial phase of the doctrine (in Philip the Chancellor and the Franciscan *Summa Halensis*), but afterwards the references to his work are rather rare—an exception is Henry of Ghent's "new way to God" from the first concepts (see ch. 7.3.2).

2.3 The reception of Aristotle

An essential difference to the Boethian age is the extension of the corpus of philosophical writings. The intellectual life of the thirteenth century was shaped by the reception of the entire *corpus Aristotelicum*, including the *Physics*, the *Metaphysics* and the *Ethics*. Three topics in the work of the Philosopher prove to be of particular interest for the formation of a doctrine of the transcendentals: the conception of the science of metaphysics, the various claims concerning the common notions "being", "one", "true" and "good", and the mode of predication proper to these terms.

2.3.1 *The* Metaphysics

A new era in medieval metaphysics started when the work that was absent in the philosophical corpus of the *aetas Boetiana*, Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, became available in an incomplete Latin translation around the middle of the twelfth century. Other translations followed; an important role in the process of reception played the Arabic-Latin translation, called the *Metaphysica nova* (1220–1224), that was drawn up by Michael Scotus as part of his translation of Averroes's Long Commentary on the *Metaphysics*.[49]

The ambiguity of First Philosophy

The reading of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the first half of the thirteenth century was determined, as we have noted in the first chapter (1.3), by

[49] For a survey of the translations, cf. the Praefatio in Aristoteles latinus, Vol. XXV/3: *Metaphysica, recensio et Translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeka* (ed G. Vuillemin – Diem, Leiden – New York – Köln 1995, pp. 1–8). Cf. J. Brams, "Der Einfluß der Aristoteles-Übersetzungen auf den Rezeptionsprozeß", in: L. Honnefelder / R. Wood / M. Dreyer / M.-A. Aris (eds.), *Albertus Magnus and the Beginnings of the Medieval Reception of Aristotle in the Latin West. From Richardus Rufus to Franciscus de Mayronis*, Münster 2005 (Subsidia Albertina, 1), pp. 27–44.

the theological conception of First Philosophy. It was a heritage of the Boethian age, insofar as Boethius, in his work *De trinitate*, transmitted to the Middle Ages the theological understanding maintained by the Neoplatonic commentators, who considered the *Metaphysics* the study of what is "beyond nature" and a philosophy of the transcendent. Their reading was based on Aristotle's argument for a threefold division of the theoretical sciences in the sixth book: If there is something that is immaterial and immutable, its inquiry neither belongs to physics nor to mathematics, but to divine science or "theology". The "most dignified" genus of being, the first being, is the object of First Philosophy.

But, as we have also noticed in the first chapter (1.4), after 1250 another understanding of First Philosophy developed in connection with another concept of *transcendens*: metaphysics is the *scientia transcendens* in the sense of the study of the transcendentals. The reasons for this transformation process are complex, but the first thing to note is that the reorientation was not wholly foreign to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

Aristotle's conception is not unambiguous. Significant is the "doubt" he advances as a kind of appendix to his theological determination of First Philosophy in book VI. One might raise the question, he states, whether First Philosophy is universal or deals with one genus or nature. The first part of his answer suggests the latter alternative. If there is no substance other than those formed by nature, physics will be the first science. If, however, there is an immovable substance, the science of this must be prior and must be first philosophy. But Aristotle then adds that this science is "universal, because it is first" and its task will be the consideration of being qua being.[50]

Aristotle's addition is remarkable since it shows awareness that the division of philosophy into three particular sciences raises a problem. As particular sciences they cannot consider the principles and objects common to them, but presuppose a first, architectonic discipline with universal pretensions. The relation between universality and particularity, however, remains unclear in Aristotle's project. What deserves

[50] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VI, c. 1, 1026a 22–32. *Aristoteles latinus*, Vol. XXV/3,2: *Metaphysica, recensio Guillelmi de Moerbeka* (ed. Vuillemin-Diem, p. 127): "Dubitabit enim utique aliquis utrum prima philosophia sit uniuersalis aut circa aliquod genus et naturam unam (…). Si quidem igitur non est aliqua altera substantia preter natura consistentes, phisica utique erit prima scientia. Sed si est aliqua substantia immobilis, hec prior et philosophia prima, et uniuersalis sic quia prima; et de ente in quantum ens huius utique erit speculari".

attention in the reply to the doubt is his description of the task of First Philosophy: "the consideration of being as being", because this is an implicit reference to another determination of this discipline in the *Metaphysics*.

In book IV Aristotle proclaims that "there is a science which investigates being as being and that which belongs to being essentially (*secundum se*)". This science—which remains without a name in this text—is contrasted to the other sciences, insofar as these cut off a part of being and consider the properties of that part. They are "particular" sciences, none of which deals universally with being as such; First Philosophy, by contrast, is the study of being in general. Aristotle underlines that this science must grasp the first causes of being as being, since in the first book it was shown that the discipline for which he seeks treats of the first principles and highest causes.[51]

Aristotle's First Philosophy seems to contain a crucial ambiguity: it is the study of the most universal predicate "being", and it is the study of the "most dignified" kind of being. Can this occur in one and the same science and, if so, how are these studies related to one another? Is Aristotle's presentation of First Philosophy as theology in book VI of the *Metaphysics* compatible with his exposition of it as the universal science of being as being? Up until today a controversial issue in scholarship on Aristotle and on metaphysics in general has been the relationship between the divergent determinations of First Philosophy.[52]

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[51] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IV, c. 1, 1003a 21–32. *Aristoteles latinus*, Vol. XXV/3,2: *Metaphysica, recensio Guillelmi de Moerbeka* (ed. Vuillemin-Diem, p. 67): "Est scientia quedam que speculatur ens in quantum est ens et que huic insunt secundum se. Hec autem nulli in parte dictarum eadem; aliarum enim nulla intendit uniuersaliter de ente in quantum est ens. Verum partem eius abscindentes aliquam circa hanc speculantur accidens (…). Quoniam autem principia et extremas querimus causas, palam quia nature cuiusdam ipsas secundum se esse est necesse. (…) Unde et nobis entis in quantum est ens prime cause sunt accipiende".

[52] For a review of scholarship, cf. J. Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian 'Metaphysics'. A Study in the Greek Background of Medieval Thought*, Toronto 1963. Id., "The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian *Metaphysics*—Revisited", in: P. Morewedge (ed.), *Philosophies of Existence, Ancient and Modern*, New York 1982, pp. 33–59. "Métaphysique et ontologie: Études sur la métaphysique d'Aristote", special issue of *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 90 (1992), pp. 385–522. E. Berti, "La *Metafisica* di Aristotele: 'onto-teologia' o 'filosofia prima'?", in: *Rivista di Filosofia neo-scolastica* 85 (1993), pp. 256–282. For a more recent evaluation, cf. D. Fonfara, "Aristoteles' Erste Philosophie: universalistische oder paradigmatische Ontologie?", in: K. Engelhard (ed.), *Aufklärungen. Festschrift für K. Düsing zum 60. Geburtstag*, Berlin 2002 (Philosophische Schriften, 47), pp. 15–37.

The medieval "basic question" as to the proprium subiectum

1. Typical of the medieval reception of Aristotle is the claim made in the work *De natura generis*, namely that "being" or *ens in communi* is the *subiectum* of First Philosophy. It reflects the specific contribution medieval commentators made to the ongoing debate on the nature of First Philosophy by raising the question as to the "proper subject" (*subiectum proprium*) of metaphysics—in the Introduction we have listed this question as the second structural moment of our inquiry into the transcendental way of thought. The importance of the question appears from the fact that the prominent medieval commentators of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, like Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, as well as Francisco Suárez in his *Disputationes metaphysicae*, start their works with this question.

Albert the Great, in the first treatise of his Commentary on the *Metaphysics*, makes what he calls a "digression" in order to explain what "the proper subject" (*proprium subiectum*) of this science is. A preliminary account, he states, is necessary because of the diversity of opinions among the philosophers.[53] Thomas Aquinas, in the prologue of his *Metaphysics* Commentary (dateable ca. 1270), discusses a threefold consideration of metaphysical objects, and establishes the unity of First Philosophy by determining the "proper subject" of this discipline.[54] Duns Scotus, in the introduction to the first question of his *Questions on the Metaphysics*, describes the twofold orientation of First Philosophy: it deals with what is most common, the *transcendentia*, and with the first causes. Scotus observes that there are various opinions on the question which of these ought to be its proper object: "Therefore the first question is whether the proper subject of metaphysics is being-as-being (…) or God and the intelligences (…)".[55]

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[53] Albert the Great, *Metaphysica*, I, tract. 1, c. 2 (ed. B. Geyer, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XVI/1, Münster 1960, p. 3): "Et est digressio declarans, quid sit huius scientiae proprium subiectum; et est in eo disputatio de tribus opinionibus philosophorum, quae sunt de subiecto".

[54] Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, prol. (ed. M.-R. Cathala, Turin-Rome 1950, pp. 1–2).

[55] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, I, q. 1 (ed. Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera philosophica*, Vol. III, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997, p. 15): "De isto autem obiecto huius scientiae ostensum est prius quod haec scientia est circa transcendentia; ostensum est autem quod est circa altissimas causas. Quod autem istorum debeat poni proprium eius obiectum, variae sunt opiniones. Ideo de

Directive for Francisco Suárez's project of the *Disputationes metaphysicae* is the first Disputation, in which he examines "the nature of First Philosophy or metaphysics". Suárez starts this inquiry in the first section by raising the question as to the adequate "object" or "subject" of this science.[56]

From this survey it is evident that authors from the thirteenth until the sixteenth century devoted a lot of attention and attached considerable weight to the question as to the "subject" of First Philosophy. By adopting Martin Heidegger's phrase of "*die Grundfrage der Metaphysik*", which according to him is concerned with the question of being, one could say that the question as to the "subject" is the "basic question" of medieval metaphysics.[57]

2. What is new in the commentary tradition is not the idea of the "subject of science" as such, although the medievals revaluated its systematic importance, but the application of this notion to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In this way the Latin commentators intended to establish both the unity of First Philosophy in itself and its distinction from other sciences, for, as we have seen in the Introduction, the subject of a science brings about both unity and distinction.

By raising the question as to the *subiectum metaphysicae*, the commentators attempted to invest Aristotle's writing with a structural unity that it never had in the Philosopher himself, regarding his divergent determinations of *meta ta physika*. The Arab philosopher Avicenna provided the model for their discussion in his work *De philosophia prima sive scientia divina*. He was the first to raise what would become the "basic question" of medieval metaphysics (see 2.4.1).

Another aim of this question was to distinguish metaphysics from the other sciences. But whereas in *De natura generis* the statement

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hoc quaeritur primo utrum proprium subiectum metapysicae sit ens in quantum ens (…) vel Deus et Intelligentiae (…)".

[56] Suárez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, I, prol. (ed. C. Berton, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXV, Paris 1866, p. 2): "[E]t ideo primum omnium inquirendum nobis est hujus doctrinae objectum, seu subjectum".

[57] M. Pickavé, "Heinrich von Gent über das Subjekt der Metaphysik als Ersterkanntes", in: *Documenti e Sudi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 12 (2001), pp. 493–517, here p. 493. Cf. J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, Paris, 1990, p. 9: "A partir du milieu du XIII^{e} siècle (…), la question du statut de la métaphysique, de sa nature et de son 'objet' se rassemble dans la détermination du *subjectum metaphysicae*". For Heidegger's *Grundfrage*, cf. M. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, Tübingen ^{2}1958, pp. 1–6.

on the subject was meant to indicate the distinction of metaphysics from logic, the main concern of the commentators was the distinction of this discipline from Christian theology. This concern reflects a fundamental innovation of the thirteenth century: the rise of Christian theology as a *scientia* distinct from philosophical theology.[58] This development is a central motive for the medieval reflections on the subject of science. The basic question thus also has the function to demarcate the properly philosophical dimension of human thought from theological discourse—an essential aspect for the interpretation of medieval thought, of which the philosophical character has been disputed more than once.

The "basic" question seems to be rather formal, but proves to have consequences for the conception of First Philosophy. The outcome of the discussions was that the Latin commentators rejected the theological understanding of the unity of metaphysics as a philosophy of the transcendent, but regarded being in general as the proper subject of this science; most of them upheld an ontological conception.

"Ontology" is a modern term with a specific connotation; it was coined in the early seventeenth century and expresses the beginning separation of a general science of being from the study of the divine. When we apply the term "ontology" to medieval metaphysics, it does not have this modern connotation, although the idea of splitting up metaphysics was not unknown in the Middle Ages. The idea was advocated by the Scotist Francis of Marchia in the fourteenth century (see ch. 10.5.3). But most medieval thinkers hold on to the inner unity of the science of being and the divine science. Metaphysics as the science of being includes the study of the divine and consequently has an "onto-theological" structure.[59] This structure was elaborated in different ways, but the decisive viewpoint from which the divine is studied is that of the subject of this science, *i.e.* being in general. In that sense medieval metaphysics becomes "ontology". The ontological conception was the condition for a process that one could call the "transcendentalisation" of medieval metaphysics.

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[58] Cf. M.-D. Chenu, *La théologie comme science au XIII^e siècle*, Paris ³1957 (Bibliothèque Thomiste, 33). U. Köpf, *Die Anfänge der theologischen Wissenschaftstheorie im 13. Jahrhundert*, Tübingen 1974 (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, 49).

[59] Cf. O. Boulnois, "Quand commence l'ontothéologie? Aristote, Thomas d'Aquin et Duns Scot", in: *Revue Thomiste* 95 (1995), pp. 85–108. Id., "La métaphysique au Moyen Age: onto-théologie ou diversité rebelle?", in: C. Esposito / P. Porro (eds.), *Metaphysica, sapientia, scientia divina*, pp. 37–66.

2.3.2 *The Philosopher and the common notions*

The *corpus aristotelicum* is the primary source to which medieval authors appeal for their doctrine of the transcendental notions. They always refer to the same four Aristotelian texts: the Philosopher's claim that "being" is not a genus (in the third book of the *Metaphysics*), his discussion of the relation between being and one (in the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*), the insinuation of an "ontological" conception of truth (in the second book of the *Metaphysics*), and the criticism of the Platonic Idea of the Good (in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, c. 4).

In the fourteenth century, the German Dominican Berthold of Moosburg simply identified Aristotle's philosophy with the transcendental position: "Aristotle posits some *communia*, which he calls *transcendentia*" (see ch. 12.1). Pierre Aubenque, however, has pointed out that the transposition of a systematic theory of the transcendentals to Aristotle is "an error of Scholastic interpreters".[60] His observation is correct, insofar as Berthold's "Aristotle" has undergone a medieval transformation. In the Greek philosopher there are some hints, but there is certainly no *system* of the transcendentals; the development of a systematic doctrine is an original achievement of thirteenth-century thought.

Even more critical than Aubenque is Karl Bärthlein, who has examined all passages in the *corpus aristotelicum* which Scholastic authors relate to their doctrines of the transcendentals.[61] He has denied the legitimacy of their appeal to the Philosopher: Aristotle does not have an ontological doctrine of transcendental unity, truth and goodness. But as several reviewers have observed, Bärthlein's reading of the Aristotelian texts is strongly determined by his own position of the so-called "new ontology", that is, of the transcendental philosophy starting with Kant.[62] This presupposition is apparent from his definition of "transcendental". He describes it as the idea that being as such is "beyond the categories" and therefore cannot have any determination

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[60] P. Aubenque, *Le problème de l'être chez Aristote*, Paris 1962 (Quadrige, 121), pp. 203–204, in particular p. 204, Nt. 1.

[61] K. Bärthlein, *Die Transzendentalienlehre der alten Ontologie*, Vol. I: *Die Transzendentalienlehre im Corpus Aristotelicum*, Berlin – New York 1972. The study is divided into three parts: texts in the *corpus aristotelicum* concerning truth (pp. 22–96), concerning goodness (pp. 77–108), and concerning being and unity (pp. 109–370).

[62] Cf. the review by J. Owens in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 57 (1975), pp. 217–222.

in respect of content. It is then difficult to see how being as "the logical minimum" can have properties such as "truth" and "goodness" or can be the subject of a "real" science. Bärthlein's study is another example of the tendency to investigate the history of transcendental thought from an exclusively Kantian perspective.

"Being" is not a genus

A lead for the transcendentality of "being" might have been Aristotle's statement: "Being (*ens*) is not a genus". Aristotle advances this thesis in a discussion with the Platonists in book III of his *Metaphysics*, the book of the aporiae. The seventh aporia concerns the question whether the first genera are the principles of things. If the highest genera are principles, then that applies especially to "being" and "one", for according to the Platonists they are the "greatest genera"; they are predicated of all things. But Aristotle objects that it is impossible that "being" and "one" are genera. The core of his argument concerns the relation between being and difference. If "being" were a genus (and the same is true for "one"), a difference would have to be found which would restrict "being" to its various species. But no difference participates in the essence of a genus, for then a genus would be included twice in the definition of the species. A difference is outside the essence of the genus. There is, however, no difference at all to be found that would be outside of being, for what is outside of being is nothing, and non-being cannot be a difference. Thus "being" cannot be a genus.[63] It has a "too great commonness" (*nimia communitas*), as Duns Scotus phrases it.[64]

Aristotle's claim, which was adopted by Porphyry in his *Isagoge*, is purely negative in character, and modern interpreters have agreed with this conclusion. According to Pierre Aubenque the thesis "Being is not a genus" expresses that the universality of being is categorially empty and contributes nothing to the definition that indicates what something is. "Being" is a sign of poverty, it is not *even* a genus.[65] The medievals, however, converted the negative statement "Being is not

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[63] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, III, c. 3, 998b 17–28.

[64] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XVI, Vatican 1955, p. 270): "[Ens] non est proprie genus, propter nimiam sui communitatem".

[65] P. Aubenque, *Le problème de l'être chez Aristote*, pp. 229–232.

a genus" into a positive one: "Being is a *transcendens*". The medieval reformulation is a sign of a more positive interpretation of the semantic value of "being": no difference can be added to it; "being" is a sign of richness, since it includes all differences. In Albert the Great's commentary on Porphyry, the argument for the non-generic nature of being (see 2.2) is that being signifies something that does not belong to the essence of a thing but that nevertheless is a basic feature of reality, namely, existence.

The convertibility of being and one

Having established in *Metaphysics*, IV, c. 1, that First Philosophy investigates being *qua* being and the properties that belong *per se* to being, Aristotle in the next chapter considers "the one". This order suggests, although it is not explicitly stated, that this notion is an essential attribute of being. The discussion of "the one" starts with a remark about its relation to being: "Being and the one are the same and one single nature in the sense that they follow upon each other (…) but not in the sense that they are determined by one concept (*logos*)" (1003b 22–25).[66] Here Aristotle formulates two features of the relation between being and one: a real identity ("the same nature") but a conceptual difference whereby "one" is distinguished from "being". In book IV, he does not indicate what the *logos* or *ratio* of "the one" is, but the concept is clarified in book X, which deals entirely with the one and the many. There Aristotle concludes that the *ratio* of "one" is "indivisible" or "undivided"; "one" thus adds a negation to "being".[67] Aristotle also characterizes the relation of identity between "being" and "one" by the notion of "convertibility": "they are convertible, for that which is one, is also somehow being, and that which is being is somehow one". The

[66] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV, c. 2, 1003b 22–25. *Aristotles latinus*, Vol. XXV/3: *Metaphysica, recensio Guillelmi de Moerbeka* (ed. Vuillemin-Diem, p. 68): "Si igitur ens et unum idem et una natura eo quod se ad inuicem consequuntur (…), sed non ut una ratione ostensa". For Aristotle's doctrine of unity, cf. in addition to K. Bärthlein, *Die Transzendentalienlehre der alten Ontologie*, Vol. I, pp. 109–370; M. J. Loux, "Aristotle on the Transcendentals", in: *Phronesis* 18 (1973), pp. 225–239; L. Couloubaritsis, "L'être et l'un chez Aristote", in: *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne* 1 (1983), pp. 49–98 and pp. 143–195; E. Halper, "Aristotle on the Convertibility of One and Being", in: *The New Scholasticism* 59 (1985), pp. 213–227; E. Berti, "L'uno ed i molti nella Metafisica di Aristotele", in: V. Melchiorre (ed.), *L'uno e i molti*, Milano 1990 (Metafisica e Storia della Metafisica, 8), pp. 155–180.

[67] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, X, c. 1, 1052a 15–36.

term 'convertible' derives from the theory of the predicables that is articulated in the *Topics*; it means that subject and attribute are related in such a way that they are interchangeable in predication.[68]

In the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*, the Philosopher adduces two arguments for the convertibility of being and one. The first argument is based on linguistic considerations that are confirmed by physical evidence. The expressions "*one* man", "*being* man" and "man" are the same. The addition of the terms "one" and "being" does not express anything different from the nature of "man". This conclusion is corroborated by a consideration of the processes of generation and corruption. When a *man* is generated, *being* man is generated, and at the same time *one* man is. From this it is apparent that "one" is not anything else than "being". Aristotle's second argument is most concise: "the substance of each thing is one, and not *per accidens*; and similarly it is not a being accidentally". The substance of a thing is one and being through itself.[69] Medieval authors—inspired by the "Commentator" (Averroes)—elaborate upon this argument in their commentaries. If "one" were not predicated *per se* of a thing but by something added, this would imply an infinite regress. For the question arises with respect to what is added whether the "one" is predicated of it *per se* or by something else added (and so on to infinity). Therefore, the first position must be held, namely that the substance of a thing is one by itself.[70]

From both arguments Aristotle draws the conclusion that there are as many species of "one" as there are of "being". Just as being is divided into the categories, so is the one differentiated according to the categories: unity in the category of substance is "the same" (*idem*), in the category of quantity "the equal", in the category of quality "the similar".[71] The purpose of this exposition is to show that it is the task

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[68] *Ibid.*, XI, c. 3, 1061a 15–17. Cf. *Topics*, I, c. 8, 103b 7–17.

[69] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV, c. 2, 1003b 26–33.

[70] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Metaphysicorum*, lect. 2, n. 555.

[71] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV, c. 2, 1003b 33–1004a 2. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Metaphysicorum*, lect. 2, n. 561 (ed. Cathala, p. 156): "Dicit ergo primo, quod ex quo unum et ens idem significant, et eiusdem sunt species eaedem, oportet quod tot sint species entis, quot sunt species unius, et sibinvicem respondentes. Sicut enim partes entis sunt substantia, quantitas et qualitas etc., ita et partes unius sunt idem, aequale et simile. Idem enim unum in substantia est. Aequale, unum in quantitate. Simile, unum in qualitate. Et secundum alias partes entis possent sumi aliae partes unius, si essent nomina posita".

of the same science to investigate being in general as well as the one, which is likewise found in all the categories.

Aristotle's discussion of "the one" in book IV of the *Metaphysics* became a main source for the doctrine of the transcendentals in several respects. First, because of its place within the *Metaphysics*. The treatment of the one immediately follows the ontological determination of this science as the study of being in general and of the attributes that belong *per se* to it. This place suggests that "one" is the first property of "being". Second, Aristotle describes the relation between being and one by two features, real identity and conceptual difference, which became the model for the thirteenth-century interpretation of the relation between being and the other transcendentals. Third, Aristotle's conclusion that the one is found in all the categories was understood as the consequence of the transcendentality of the "one", since a characteristic feature of a transcendental term is that it is not determinate to one category. Fourth, from a historical perspective, the idea of the convertibility of being and one was opposed to the Neoplatonic, transcendent conception of the "One" as that which is beyond being.

Truth is twofold: in the mind and in things

1. In Aristotle's *Metaphysics* the medieval commentators found a conception of truth that is incompatible with the idea of the transcendentality of the true. An example is Duns Scotus, who in his *Metaphysics* commentary raises the question "Whether being true (*ens verum*) must be excluded from the consideration of the metaphysician?"[72] The question is prompted by Aristotle's analysis of "veritative" being or "being-as-what-is-true" in book VI of the *Metaphysics*, in which he examines the various meanings of being in their relevance for metaphysics.

"Being as what is true" means being as a verbal copula, is a sign of the composition of subject and predicate in a sentence ("S is P"). Since this composition occurs in the intellect that forms a proposition, the origin of the "veridical" sense of being is intramental. In order to emphasize that "being as what is true" does not signify something extra-mental, Aristotle then says: "Falsity and truth are not in things—

[72] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum*, VI, q. 3 (ed. Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera philosophica*, Vol. IV, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997, p. 57): "Utrum ens verum debet excludi a consideratione metaphysici".

it is not as if the good were true, and the bad were in itself false—but in thought".[73] The proper place of truth is the mind. Aristotle draws a far-reaching conclusion from his discussion of "being as what is true". This kind of being falls outside the inquiry of metaphysics; it "must be passed over" by the science that deals with being in the proper sense, extramental being, because the cause of being-as-what-is-true is an operation of the intellect. Being in this sense belongs rather to logic or the science of the intellect.[74]

Aristotle's conclusion that (in the reading of the commentators) "truth and falsity do not exist, as good and evil, in things, but in the mind" forms a formidable obstacle to any attempt to conceive truth as a transcendental property of being.[75] It seems that "being" and "the true" belong to different orders and that their heterogenity excludes their convertibility. As Albert the Great argues, what is only in the soul cannot be convertible with what is also extramental. The true is only in the soul and is therefore not convertible with being. For the minor premise Albert adduces three ideas from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. (i) The true and the false are not in things but in knowledge. (ii) Being-as-true does not belong to metaphysics, because the cause of veritative being is knowledge and a mental being is an incomplete being. (iii) In the second book, Aristotle states that the end of theoretical reason is truth; this end can only be in the mind.[76]

2. Albert's strategy in his reply consists in emphasizing the multiplicity of the term "true": it is said in many ways (*multipliciter dicitur*). He makes a distinction between a general (ontological) sense of truth and a special (logical) sense: "Truth" can signify a general disposition of being or a composition of terms in the intellect.[77] This distinction

[73] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VI, c. 4, 1027b 17–25. For Aristotle's conception of truth, cf. K. Bärthlein, *Die Transzendentalienlehre der alten Ontologie*, Vol. I, pp. 22–76. P. Wilpert, "Zum aristotelischen Wahrheitsbegriff", in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 53 (1940), pp. 3–16. P. Crivelli, *Aristotle on Truth*, Cambridge 2004.

[74] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VI, c. 4, 1027b 25–1028a 3.

[75] Aristotle's text does not quite say what the medieval quotation states, but their reading is taken from the medieval Latin translation of the Arabic text. Cf. J. F. Wippel, "Truth in Thomas Aquinas", in: *The Review of Metaphysics* 43 (1989), pp. 295–326, here p. 297, Nt. 5.

[76] Albert the Great, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 46, a. 13 (ed. Borgnet, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. 26, Paris 1893, pp. 446–447). Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 2 *sed contra* and *resp.*; *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 16, a. 1 *sed contra*.

[77] Albert the Great, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 46, a. 13 (ed. Borgnet, Vol. 26, p. 448).

is typical of the medieval reception of the Aristotelian conception of truth and is also invoked by Duns Scotus in his *Metaphysics* commentary. Truth, he observes, is twofold: there is not only truth in the intellect but also in things.[78] For the latter idea he again appeals to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, although the Philosopher hardly elaborates an ontological conception of truth in this work.

In the second book, Aristotle maintains that "philosophy is rightly called the science of truth", and, of all the philosophical disciplines, metaphysics pre-eminently considers truth. Since one cannot know the truth without knowledge of the cause, Aristotle advances a general proposition concerning causality: the cause of an attribute or property that is common to both the cause and its effect is the maximal instance (*maximum*) of that attribute. Fire, for example, is the hottest of things because it is the cause of heat in all other things. The general proposition on the causality of the *maximum* is next applied to truth: the term 'truth' is said universally of all things; therefore, since the cause of truth has the same name and common *ratio* as its effect, it follows that whatever causes subsequent things to be true is itself most true. Hence the principles of eternal things are most true, because these are always true and the cause of being of other things. From this reasoning Aristotle infers the corollary "that each thing is related to truth in the same way as it is to being".[79]

Duns Scotus presents Aristotle's corollary as an argument against the exclusion of truth from the domain of metaphysics: The true is convertible with being and thus pertains to the science of being.[80] Thomas Aquinas cites Aristotle's statement "There is the same disposition (*dispositio*) of things in being and in truth" as a counterargument against objections suggesting that being and true cannot be convertible because truth is only in the intellect.[81] That they have the same "disposition" means according to Aquinas that the order (*ordo*) in being and in truth is identical. That which is being in the highest

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[78] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum*, VI, q. 3 (ed. Franciscan Institute, Vol. IV, p. 65): "Et primo distinguendum est de 'vero'. Est enim veritas in rebus et veritas in intellectu".

[79] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, II, c. 1, 993b 19–31.

[80] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum*, VI, q. 3, n. 3 (ed. Franciscan Institute, Vol. IV, p. 57).

[81] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 16, a. 3 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. IV, Rome 1888, p. 210): "Sed contra est quod dicit Philosophus II *Metaphys.*, quod eadem est dispositio rerum in esse et veritate".

degree is true in the highest degree. The reason is not that being and the true are conceptually identical but rather that "a thing is apt to be conformed (*adaequari*) to the intellect in the degree to which a thing has entity (*entitas*). Consequently, the notion of truth follows upon that of being".[82] Truth now appears in its ontological dimension, as a transcendantal property of being.

Aristotle's critique of Plato's Idea of the Good

1. A crucial text for the medieval doctrine of the transcendentals and a fundamental source for the concept of "good" was Aristotle's discussion of Plato in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the first book, the "Philosopher" investigates the question what might be the highest good for a human being, in which his happiness (*eudaimonia*) consists. To that end he is concerned with the Idea of the Good, which Plato calls "the greatest thing to learn" (*megiston mathêma*)[83] and which indeed is a key notion in his metaphysical-ethical conception of philosophy. Aristotle acknowledges that this discussion is difficult for him, because those who have introduced the Ideas are his "friends". But he sees it as the duty of a philosopher to set aside his own feelings for the sake of maintaining the truth.[84] And one must recognize that Aristotle's criticism of Plato's Idea of the Good is radical, since he considers such an Idea to be theoretically impossible and practically irrelevant.

Aristotle advances a number of arguments against the existence of a universal Idea of the Good.[85] The first argument (1096a 17–23) departs

[82] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 ad 5 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXII/1, Rome 1975, p. 7): "dispositio non accipitur ibi secundum quod est in genere qualitatis sed secundum quod importat quendam ordinem: cum enim illa quae sunt causa aliorum essendi sint maxime entia et illa quae sunt causa veritatis sint maxime vera, concludit Philosophus quod idem est ordo alicui rei in esse et veritate, ita scilicet quod ubi invenitur quod est maxime ens, est maxime verum. Unde nec hoc ideo est quia ens et verum ratione sunt idem sed quia secundum hoc quod aliquid habet de entitate secundum hoc est natum adaequari intellectui, et sic ratio veri sequitur rationem entis".

[83] Plato, *Republic*, VI, 505A.

[84] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 4, 1096a 11–17.

[85] For the details and problems of the argumentation, cf. H. Flashar, "The Critique of Plato's Theory of Ideas in Aristotle's Ethics", in: J. Barnes / M. Schofield / R. Sorabji (eds.), *Articles on Aristotle*, Vol. II: Ethics and politics, London 1977, pp. 1–16. J. L. Ackrill, "Aristotle on 'Good' and the Categories", in: *ibid.*, pp. 17–24. S. MacDonald, "Aristotle and the Homonymy of the Good", in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 71 (1989), pp. 150–174.

from a Platonic principle and wants to show that the Idea of the Good is not consistent with that. The adherents of the doctrine of the Ideas did not posit Ideas of things which stand in a relation of "prior" and "posterior"; for example, they did not posit an Idea "number" embracing all numbers. Now the good is predicated both in the category of substance and in that of quality and in that of relation. These categories stand in an ontological order: the *ousia* is naturally prior to the relative, which is an accident of being. Thus, according to Plato's own principle there cannot be a common Idea of the Good.

The second argument (1096a 23–29) is based on the categorial diversity of the good, brought up in the first argument. "The 'good' is spoken of in as many ways as 'being' ". In the category of substance, the good is God and mind—examples that have to be understood against the background of Aristotle's exposition in book XII of the *Metaphysics*—, in the category of quality, the good is the virtue, in that of relation it is the useful, in that of time the opportune moment, etc. Accordingly, Aristotle concludes that "clearly the good cannot be something common, that is universal and single, for if it were, it would be spoken of in only one of the categories, not in them all".

The third argument (1096a 29–34) starts from the Platonic presupposition that there is only one science of those things corresponding to one Idea. If there were an Idea of the Good, there should also be one single science of all the goods. But in fact there are many sciences of the good, even of the things that fall under one category. There is, for instance, no single science of the "opportune moment"; opportunity in war is studied by strategics, in disease by medicine. This argument from science is surprising since, as we shall see (2.3.3), Aristotle argues, in his *Metaphysics*, that the different senses of "being" according to its categorial diversity do not exclude the possibility of one science of being.[86] The "good", he had claimed in the second argument, is predicated in the same way as "being", so that one wonders what could prevent the good from being one science, a universal agathology—medieval philosophy will substantiate this possibility in Philip the Chancellor's *Summa de bono* (see ch. III).

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[86] Cf. C. Steel, " 'The Greatest Thing to Learn is the Good'. On the Claims of Ethics and Metaphysics to be the First Philosophy", in: W. Goris (ed.), *Die Metaphysik und das Gute. Aufsätze zu ihrem Verhältnis in Antike und Mittelalter Jan A. Aertsen zu Ehren*, Leuven 1999 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales. Bibliotheca, 2), pp. 1–25, here pp. 7–8.

2. Aristotle's criticism of Plato presupposes his doctrine of the categories. In all three arguments against the existence of the Idea of the Good, he underlines the categorial diversity of the good: it is said in many ways, according to the different categories to which the good belongs. Hence there cannot be a common *ratio* of the good that is predicated of all goods in the same sense. What Aristotle denies is the univocal commonness of a genus.

This negative conclusion, however, has a positive ground: The good, just as being, is found in all categories. Aristotle therefore implicitly ascribes a commonness to the good that "transcends" the commonness of a genus, and it is this element that is explicated by medieval authors. "The philosophers", Albert the Great observes, "rarely speak of the good that runs through (*circuit*) all the genera, excepting Aristotle in the first book of his *Ethics*".[87] Aristotle's critique of Plato was read as an indication of the transcendental character of the good. *Bonum* is a *transcendens*, since it has the essential features of such a determination: it is convertible with being and, as Aristotle spells out, found in all categories.[88]

Aristotle does not say what the common *ratio* of the good is, by which it is distinguished from "being". Several medieval authors understood the good as "that which is desirable" (*appetibile*) on the basis of the "definition" mentioned by Aristotle at the beginning of the *Ethics* (I, c. 1): "The good has rightly been declared to be 'that which all things desire'" (1094a 3). The medieval transcendental interpretation of this definition is notable, because the context in which Aristotle presents the definition is human activity. In his *Ethics* commentary, Thomas emphasizes that this description of the good—*bonum est quod omnia appetunt*—must not be understood to mean that there is one specific good that all things desire. Every thing desires a good that suits its nature. The phrase defines the good "commonly taken" (*communiter*

[87] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, n. 6 ad 2 (ed. P. Simon, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXXVII/1, Münster 1972, p. 116): "philosophi raro loquuntur de bono, quod circuit omnia genera, nisi Aristoteles in I Ethicorum".

[88] Cf. Albert the Great, *Super Ethica*, I, lect. 6, n. 30 (ed. W. Kübel, in: *Opera omnia* XIV/1, Münster 1968, p. 26): "sed bonum, quia convertitur cum ente, dicitur in omnibus praedicamentis". Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, I, lect. 6 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XLVII/1, Rome 1969, p. 23): "Bonum autem, sicut et ens cum quo convertitur, invenitur in quolibet praedicamento".

sumptum) and is thus regarded by Thomas as the determination of the transcendental good.[89]

3. The medieval conception of the good had an anti-Platonic origin, insofar as it originated in Aristotle's criticism of Plato. One could wonder whether Aristotle's account does justice to the Platonic metaphysics of the good, when, right at the beginning of his discussion (1096a 11), he takes the Idea of the Good as a universal good (*to katholou*), which, as a genus, is univocally said of all good things. Several medieval commentators of the *Ethics* adopted a critical attitude towards Aristotle's critique. They had no access to the work *The Republic*, in which Plato explains the Form of the Good, but could dispose of another source. Because of a particularity of the medieval reception of the *Ethics*, they were familiar with the commentary of a marked critic of Aristotle. The first complete Latin translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1246/1247) was drawn up by Robert Grosseteste, who at the same time translated a corpus of Greek commentaries on this work. Part of this corpus was the commentary on the first book, composed by the Byzantine scholar Eustratius of Nicea (beginning of the twelfth century). This commentary contains a critique of Aristotle's critique, clearly inspired by Neoplatonism.[90]

According to Eustratius, Aristotle misunderstood Plato's Idea of the Good fundamentally. An interesting aspect of his exposition that is relevant for the history of the doctrine of the transcendentals is Eustratius's introduction of a kind of commonness of the good that is different from the univocal commonness of a genus as well as from the commonness of a transcendental. The commonness of the Good is based on its causality; the Platonic Good is a transcendent reality, which is nevertheless common by its effect.

Eustratius criticizes Aristotle for not having taken the Idea of the Good *secundum intellectum Platonis*. Plato understands the Good, which is identical with the One, as the common cause (*communis*

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[89] Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, I, lect. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XLVII/1, p. 5): "Non autem est unum bonum in quod omnia tendunt (…). Et ideo non describitur hic aliquod unum bonum, sed bonum communiter sumptum".

[90] Cf. K. Giocarinis, "Eustratius of Nicaea's Defence of the Doctrine of Ideas", in: *Franciscan Studies* 24 (1964), pp. 159–204. H. P. F. Mercken, "The Greek Commentators on Aristotle's *Ethics*", in: R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1990, pp. 407–444. C. Steel, "Neoplatonic Sources in the Commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Eustratius and Michael of Ephesus", in: *Bulletin de Philosophie médiévale* 44 (2002), pp. 51–57.

causa) of all things and as that which surpasses all beings (*super entia omnia*). All other goods are related to this First as the common good that is participated by all things. It is therefore not absurd, when Plato calls this good "that which is common to all as cause" (*commune omnibus ut causa*) and "the universal good (*universale bonum*) before the many goods". Eustratius adds an argument *ad hominem*. Aristotle himself, at the beginning of his *Ethics*, praises those who had defined the good as "that which all things desire". The object of this desire must, according to the commentator, necessarily be everything; it is the First of all things, which is most causing (*causalissimum*) and most universal (*universalissimum*). This exactly answers to Plato's conception of the universal good. Since Aristotle accepts this view at the beginning of his work, his opposition in the fourth chapter of book I is purely "sophistic" (*magis sophistice*).[91]

In 1250, some three years after Grosseteste's completion of his translation of the *Ethics*, Albert the Great composed a commentary on this work. In his discussion of Aristotle's criticism of Plato's Idea of the Good, he refers to the "Commentator", that is, to Eustratius. Albert summarizes Plato's conception of the universal on the basis of Eustratius's commentary and concludes that Aristotle's arguments against Plato are only compelling, if one takes the Idea of the Good as the form of a genus. But if one understands—in accordance with the Commentator—the Idea in the sense that all things exemplarily descend from a First, which formally causes all good things, it is clear that Aristotle's arguments are "useless" (*nihil valent*).[92]

2.3.3 *Equivocity and "analogy"*

1. Concerning another structural aspect of the idea of transcendentality—the conceptual unity of "being" and of other transgeneric terms—

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[91] Eustratius of Nicea, *In Ethicam Nicomacheam*, I, c. 6 (ed. H. P. F. Mercken, in: *The Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle in the Latin Translation of Robert Grosseteste Bishop of Lincoln († 1253)*, Vol. I, Leiden 1973 (Corpus Latinorum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum, VI/1), pp. 76,89–77,25).

[92] Albert the Great, *Super Ethica*, I, lect. 5, n. 29 (ed. Kübel, p. 25): "Dicendum secundum Commentatorem, quod hoc falso imponit Aristoteles Platoni. Distinguit enim Plato triplex universale (…)"; *ibid.*, lect. 6, n. 30 (p. 27): "Et hae quidem rationes Aristotelis necessario concludunt contra Platonem, si ponebat unam ideam omnium bonorum, quae sit forma generis vel speciei (…); si autem intellexerit ideam unam, secundum quod omnia descendunt exemplariter ab uno primo, quod formaliter efficit omnia bona, ut dicit Commentator, sic planum est, quod rationes nihil valent".

the thirteenth-century commentators found support for their doctrine of analogy in the teaching of the Philosopher. Aristotle himself uses the term *analogia*, but the medieval "analogy" is not identical with the Greek notion.[93] The reception of the *corpus aristotelicum* provided two fundamental texts for the analogical community of transcendental terms. Both texts are concerned with the predicability of common terms. (i) In his critique of Plato's Idea of the Good in the *Ethics*, Aristotle raises the question as to the unity of the notion "good"; and (ii) after the ontological determination of First Philosophy in the fourth book of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle explains the ordered multiplicity of "being"—an exposition that touches the possibility of a general science of being.

In the *Ethics*, Aristotle argues against Plato that the good is found in all categories and that the term thus is not univocal, but "homonymous" or equivocal. But Aristotle advances an objection to his own view, because this cannot give a satisfactory explanation of the unity in our predication of the term 'good': What we call "good" does not seem to have the same name by mere chance. Aristotle suggests three possible solutions by way of questioning. Are things then called "good", because they have come forth from one thing or because they are all ordered to one (*pros hen*) or rather by "analogy"? Only the third possibility is explained by an example, which makes clear that "analogy" means an equality of two proportions involving at least four terms (a:b = c:d): "What the eye is to the body, the intellect is to the soul". Aristotle does not determine the question here; its discussion would be more appropriate to "another branch of philosophy".[94] This other discipline is First Philosophy.

The ontological determination of First Philosophy in book IV of the *Metaphysics* raises a difficulty. If metaphysics studies being qua being, the unity of this science seems highly problematic, because Aristotle himself claims that "being" is not a genus; it is immediately divided into ten genera. From the categorial diversity of being, Porphyry, in

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[93] Cf. E. Berti, "L'analogia in Aristotele. Interpretazione recenti e possibili sviluppi", in: G. Casetta (ed.), *Origini e sviluppi dell'analogia. Da Parmenide a S. Tommaso*, Roma 1987 (Settimane filosofiche di Vallombrosa, 1), pp. 94–115. P. Aubenque, "Sur la naissance de la doctrine pseudo-aristotélicienne et l'analogie de l'ëtre", in: *Les Études philosophiques* 3–4 (1989), pp. 291–304.

[94] Aristoteles, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, c. 4, 1096b 26–31.

his *Isagoge*, had concluded that "being" is said *aequivoce* (see 2.1). But how is a science of an equivocal predicate possible?

In the second chapter of book IV of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle offers a solution to this problem by pointing out that "being" is not a purely homonymous term. "Being is said in many ways, but in relation to one instance (*pros hen*) and one definite nature"; in modern scholarship the phrase "focal meaning" has become current for this *pros hen* equivocation.[95] Aristotle hardly explains this kind of equivocity, but illustrates it with the examples of "healthy" and "medical", which are said of diverse things according to the relation to one thing. The various things which are called "healthy" are all related to health, one thing in the sense that it preserves health, another in the sense that it produces it, another in the sense that it is a symptom of it, another because it is capable of it; likewise the things that are called "medical" are all related to the science of medicine. In a similar manner the term "being" has a "focal meaning", but the medieval commentators emphasize that the case of "being" is different from Aristotle's examples of "healthy" and "medical". In the case of "healthy", the unity of reference is the end, in the case of "medical", it is the efficient cause. When "being" is said of many things, the one to which they refer is not the end or the efficient cause but the subject. The "focal meaning" of being is substance, the first category.[96] This kind of non-generic unity is sufficient to guarantee the unity of a science. As Aristotle concludes, "not only in the case of what is said according to one notion does the investigation belong to the domain of one single science, but also in the case of what is said in relation to one nature".[97]

2. Both texts of Aristotle have the differentiation of equivocity in common. Just as, in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle points out with respect to "being" that it is not a purely homonymous term, so with respect to

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[95] We owe the expression to G. E. L. Owen, "Logic and Metaphysics in some Earlier Works of Aristotle", in: J. Barnes / M. Schofield / R. Sorabji (eds.), *Articles on Aristotle*, Vol. III: *Metaphysics*, London 1979, pp. 12–32.

[96] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Metaphysicorum*, lect. 1, n. 539 (ed. Cathala, p. 152): "ita etiam et ens multipliciter dicitur. Sed tamen omne ens dicitur per respectum ad unum primum. Sed hoc primum non est finis vel efficiens sicut in praemissis exemplis, sed subiectum". Thomas follows Averroes in this respect: *In IV Metaphysicorum*, c. 2 (ed. Venice 1562, in: *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis*, Vol. VIII [reprinted in Frankfurt am Main 1962], fol. 65D–66E).

[97] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV, c. 2, 1003a 33–b 18.

"the good" he, in the *Ethics*, distinguishes between homonymy in the strict sense ("by chance") and three types of equivocity in the broad sense. It was, as we have seen (sect. 2.1), Boethius who mutually designated these types as equivocation "from deliberation" (*a consilio*). In the medieval reception of Aristotle this special group of equivocals was assigned a distinct place besides univocity and equivocity. The thirteenth-century commentators introduced the notion of "analogy" as the title for this third mode of predication.[98] This development is manifest in Aquinas's commentaries.

In his commentary on the *Ethics*, he points out that the reason why Aristotle discusses the predication of the "good", is that something can be said of many things according to different *rationes* in two ways. First, according to meanings which are entirely different and are not related to one thing (*non habentes respectum ad unum*), as it is the case with what is equivocal by chance. Second, according to meanings which are not entirely different, but agree in one thing (*in aliquo uno convenientes*). In Thomas's view, Aristotle applies the latter mode of predication to the good: "Therefore he [Aristotle] says that the good is said of many things, not according to entirely different *rationes*, as it is the case with the *a casu aequivoca*, but rather *secundum analogiam*, that is according to the same proportion".[99] Aquinas ascribes the general doctrine of the analogy of the good to Aristotle; what was only one type of homonymy in the broad sense in the Philosopher, an equality of proportions, becomes the comprehensive concept in Aquinas's reading.

When Thomas, in his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, discusses Aristotle's statement "Being is said in many ways", he notes that a term can be predicated of different things in three ways. Sometimes it is predicated according to a concept (*ratio*) altogether identical, and then it is predicated "univocally", as "animal" is predicated of a horse and of an ox. Sometimes it is predicated according to concepts entirely different, and then it is predicated "equivocally", as "dog" is predicated of a star and of an animal. Sometimes a term is predicated according

[98] Cf. I. Costa, "Il problema dell' omonimia del bene in alcuni commenti scolastici all' *Ethica Nicomachea*", in: *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 17 (2006), pp. 157–230.

[99] Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri ethicorum*, I, lect. 7 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XLVII/1, p. 27): "Sic ergo dicit quod bonum dicitur de multis non secundum rationes penitus differentes sicut accidit in his quae sunt casu aequivoca (…). Vel etiam dicuntur omnia bona magis *secundum analogiam*, idest proportionem eandem".

to concepts that are different in certain respects and the same in others: different insofar as they imply different relations and the same insofar as these relations refer to one and the same thing. Then something is predicated "analogically", that is, according to the relation to one thing.[100] In this way "being" is said of things. Thomas emphasizes that the "focus" of the analogical predication is not merely one in concept, which is the kind of unity designated by a univocal term, but is one in reality.[101]

2.4 Avicenna: "The second beginning of metaphysics"

Modern scholarship has attributed an epoch-making importance to the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century reception of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the Latin West. It has been argued that when one compares the original Greek concept of First Philosophy with the medieval understanding of this discipline, it becomes clear that the medieval rediscovery and re-foundation has the character of a "second beginning of metaphysics".[102] Although I am generally not inclined to minimalize the importance of medieval philosophy, I wonder whether this phrase is a historically appropriate expression for the development of First Philosophy in the Latin world. If there is a "second beginning of metaphysics", there are good reasons for claiming that the main work of Arab metaphysics, Avicenna's *De philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, rather than the Latin philosophy of the thirteenth and fourteenth century deserves this place in the genealogy of Western metaphysics.

The significance of the Arab heritage is mostly neglected in the history of the project of a First Philosophy. But it is especially owing to Avicenna (d. 1037) that 'metaphysics' designates a philosophical discipline, not simply identical with Aristotle's homonymous writing. His work *De philosophia prima* is not a commentary on Aristotle's

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[100] Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Metaphysicorum*, lect. 1, n. 535.

[101] *Ibid.*, n. 536 (ed. Cathala, pp. 151–152): "Item sciendum quod illud unum ad quod diversae habitudines referuntur in analogicis, est unum numero, et non solum unum ratione, sicut est unum illud quod per nomen univocum designatur. Et ideo dicit quod ens etsi dicatur multipliciter, non tamen dicitur aequivoce, sed per respectum ad unum; non quidem ad unum quod sit solum ratione unum, sed quod est unum sicut una quaedam natura".

[102] L. Honnefelder, "Der zweite Anfang der Metaphysik. Voraussetzungen, Ansätze und Folgen der Wiederbegründung der Metaphysik im 13./14. Jahrhundert", in: J. P. Beckmann / L. Honnefelder / G. Schrimpf / G. Wieland (eds.), *Philosophie im Mittelalter. Entwicklungslinien und Paradigmen*, Hamburg 1987, pp. 165–186.

Metaphysics, but an independent and original account that gives First Philosophy a new and comprehensive structure.[103] It was translated into Latin in the second half of the twelfth century and determinated the medieval reading and reception of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.[104]

The first treatise of Avicenna's work contains two innovations that had a great impact on the conception of First Philosophy and the rise of medieval transcendental thought. First (sect. 2.4.1), his inquiry into the "subject" of metaphysics provided the model for the "basic question" of medieval commentators and for the rejection of the prevailing theological conception of First Philosophy in favour of an ontological one; Avicenna argues that "common being", not God, is the proper "subject" of metaphysics. Secondly (sect. 2.4.2), he introduces the doctrine of the primary notions of the intellect "being", "thing", "one", an original teaching that captivated medieval thinkers like Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus, because it points to a systematic beginning of human thought.[105]

2.4.1 *The inquiry into the "subject" of metaphysics*[106]

"Common being"

Avicenna starts his *Liber de philosophia prima* (tract. I, c. 1) with an inquiry (*inquisitio*) into the "subject" of this science. This investigation

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[103] Cf. A. Bertolacci, *The Reception of Aristotle's "Metaphysics" in Avicenna's "Kitab al-Sifa". A Milestone of Western Metaphysical Thought*, Leiden-Boston 2006 (Islamic Philosophy and Theology, 63). Engl. transl. of Avicenna's writing: M. E. Marmura (transl.), *Avicenna, The Metaphysics of "The Healing"* (a parallel English-Arabic text), Provo, Utah, 2005.

[104] Cf. M.-T. d'Alverny, *Avicenne en Occident. Recueil d'articles*, Paris 1993 (Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale, 71). For the Latin translation of the text: Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, 2 vols.: I–IV and V–X (ed. S. Van Riet, Louvain – Leiden 1977–1983).

[105] Some aspects of the reception were discussed by R. Schönberger, *Die Transformation des klassischen Seinsverständnisses. Studien zur Vorgeschichte des neuzeitlichen Seinsbegriffs im Mittelalter*, Berlin-New York 1986 (Quellen und Studien zur Philosophie, 21), pp. 95–121.

[106] A. Zimmermann, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik? Die Diskussion über den Gegenstand der Metaphysik im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert: Texte und Untersuchungen*, Leuven 1998 (*Recherches* de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales. Bibliotheca, 1), pp. 144–151. J. F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, pp. 14–30. A. Bertolacci, *The Reception of Aristotle's "Metaphysics" in Avicenna's "Kitab al-Sifa"*, pp. 111–147.

is crucial to his endeavour to give First Philosophy a solid scientific unity and to "stabilize" the nature of this discipline. "It is certain that every science possesses its proper subject (*subiectum proprium*)", but in the case of the divine science it is not evident what the subject is. Avicenna was the first to apply the notion *subiectum* of a science, derived from Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, to metaphysics and to raise what would become the "basic question" of medieval commentaries: What is the "subject" of the highest theoretical science?[107]

Is the exalted God (*Deus excelsus*) this subject? Avicenna immediately rejects this possibility and dismisses the theological conception of metaphysics. His argument appeals to a feature of a subject of science, namely that its existence is admitted in that science. What is demonstrated in a science are the properties of the subject, not the existence of the subject itself. If God were the subject of metaphysics, his existence would thus have to be presupposed in this science and either be proven in some other science or not proven at all. Avicenna argues that both parts of the alternative are inacceptable: God's existence is neither demonstrated in another science, for instance physics, nor evident by itself; metaphysics is the only discipline in which a real proof of his existence can be given. God can therefore not be the *subiectum* of metaphysics, but is rather what is "sought" (*quaesitum*) in this science.[108] Knowledge of God is the end of the metaphysical consideration. By means of the same distinction between *subiectum* and *quaesitum* of a science, Avicenna rejects another possible candidate for the subject of First Philosophy, the "ultimate causes" of things.[109]

Important though the results of the investigation are, they are so far merely negative—Avicenna himself speaks of *destructio*. But in

[107] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, I, c. 1 (ed. Van Riet, p. 4): "Constat autem quod omnis scientia habet subiectum suum proprium. Inquiramus ergo quid sit subiectum huius scientiae".

[108] *Ibid.*: "et consideremus an subiectum huius scientiae sit ipse Deus excelsus; sed non est, immo est ipse unum de his quae quaeruntur in hac scientia. Dico igitur impossibile esse ut ipse Deus sit subiectum huius scientiae, quoniam subiectum omnis scientiae est res quae conceditur esse, et ipsa scientia non inquirit nisi dispositiones illius subiecti, et hoc notum est ex aliis locis. Sed non potest concedi quod Deus sit in hac scientia ut subiectum, immo est quaesitum in ea, scilicet quoniam, si ita non est, tunc non potest esse quin sit vel concessum in hac scientia et quaesitum in alia, vel concessum in ista et non quaesitum in alia".

[109] *Ibid.* (ed. Van Riet, pp. 8–9): "Monstrata est igitur destructio illius opinionis qua dicitur quod subiectum huius scientiae sunt causae ultimae, sed tamen debes scire quod haec sunt completio et quaesitum eius".

the next chapter (I, c. 2) with the title *de stabiliendo subiectum huius scientiae* he starts the second part of his inquiry and comes to a positive conclusion. Avicenna shows that the other sciences do not study their subjects in every respect. The subject of natural science, for instance, is the body, however, not insofar as it is being or substance, but insofar as it is subject to motion or rest. Thus a more comprehensive consideration is possible. Such a consideration is even necessary, because the determinations that are common to all the sciences, for example the one inasmuch as it is one, are not dealt with in any of the particular sciences, since these determinations are not the properties of their subjects. It appears that being qua being is that which is common to all things (*commune omnibus*). Hence *ens inquantum ens* must be posited as the subject of First Philosophy, for another feature of the subject of a science consists in its being common to all that is considered by that science.[110]

What is sought after in metaphysics is what is consequent (*consequentia*) upon being as being *sine condicione*, "without any [further] condition", that is, not specified as natural, mathematical or moral being. Some of these things are as it were the *species* of being, like substance, quantity and the other categories, which are the first divisions of being; some of them are "the proper accidents" (*accidentalia propria*), such as the disjunctive properties one and many, potency and act, the possible and the necessary.[111]

Avicenna identifies the subject of metaphysics with the notion Aristotle presents in the fourth book of his *Metaphysics, ens inquantum ens*. But for the Arab philosopher, in contrast to the commentators in Late Antiquity, this phrase does not primarily refer to the first, divine being; he interprets it as *ens commune*. Avicenna upholds an ontological

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[110] *Ibid.*, c. 2 (p. 12): "Similiter etiam sunt res quae debent definiri et verificari in anima, quae sunt communes in scientiis; nulla tamen earum tractat de eis, sicut est unum inquantum unum. (…) Igitur ostensum est tibi ex his omnibus quod ens, inquantum est ens, est commune omnibus his et quod ipsum debet poni subiectum huius magisterii".

[111] *Ibid.* (p. 13): "Ideo primum subiectum huius scientiae est ens, inquantum est ens; et ea quae inquirit sunt consequentia ens, inquantum est ens, sine condicione. Quorum quaedam sunt ei quasi species, ut substantia, quantitas et qualitas, quoniam esse non eget dividi in alia priusquam in ista (…). Et ex his quaedam sunt ei quasi accidentalia propria, sicut unum et multum, potentia et effectus [*lege* actus], universale et particulare, possibile et necesse. Per hoc autem quod ens recipit haec accidentia et coaptatur illis, non est necesse illud proprie fieri vel naturale vel disciplinale vel morale vel aliquid aliorum".

conception of metaphysics; the distinctive feature of this science is its "commonness".

At the same time, however, this very feature introduces a certain tension in his conception. The difficulty is to find out how "common" *ens commune* is: Does the commonness of the subject also include divine being? The "destructive" part of Avicenna's account in chapter 1 claims that God is not the subject of First Philosophy, but that which is sought. He does not explain how God is related to the subject established in chapter 2, but the discussion of a possible objection to his view provides an implicit answer.

The objection against a science of being departs from the idea that scientific knowledge is cognition of the causes. But if being as being were the subject of metaphysics, then this science could not establish the principle or cause of being.[112] For this principle would be the principle of *all* beings, including God, so that there would be something that were the principle of itself. The impossibility of an inquiry into the causes of being contradicts, however, Aristotle's statement at the end of *Metaphysics*, IV, c. 1, that First Philosophy seeks the first causes of being as being.

In his reply, Avicenna holds on to the view that being as being is the subject of First Philosophy, but maintains that the investigation of the principle of being is not an inquiry into the principle of all beings. The metaphysician seeks the principle of *some* beings. "Being" taken in itself absolutely has no principle; to be a principle is related to being as something accidental and is one of the *consequentia* belonging to the subject.[113] Avicenna's argument implies that the "commonness" of the subject of metaphysics also includes God. Medieval authors like Henry of Ghent, explicitly draw the conclusion that God is a part of the subject of this science.[114]

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[112] *Ibid.*: "Potest autem quis dicere quod, postquam ens ponitur subiectum huius scientiae, tunc non potest esse ut ipsa stabiliat esse principia essendi".

[113] *Ibid.* (pp. 13–14): "Ad quod respondemus quod speculatio de principiis non est nisi inquisitio de consequentibus huius subiecti (…). Deinde principium non est principium omnium entium. Si enim omnium entium esset principium, tunc esset principium sui ipsius; ens autem in se absolute non habet principium; sed habet principium unumquodque esse quod scitur. Principium igitur est principium aliquibus entibus. Quapropter haec scientia non erit inquirens principia entis absolute, sed principia alicuius entium".

[114] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 7, q. 6 ad 2 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 56rS): "deus cadit sub subiecto metaphysicae, quod est ens simpliciter, eo quod intentio entis simpliciter prior est nobis quam intentio principii, quia, ut dicit Avicenna I Metaphysicae

Averroes's criticism: The "theological" conception

Within Arab philosophy, a sharp criticism against Avicenna's position was leveled by Averroes (1126–1198).[115] *Avicenna peccavit maxime*, he asserts. The basis of his objections is the same principle of the theory of science, to which Averroes appeals: no science can demonstrate its own "subject". Avicenna uses this principle in order to show that God cannot be the *subiectum* of First Philosophy, since God's existence has to be demonstrated in this science. But according to Averroes "Avicenna was gravely mistaken" regarding the place of the proof for God's existence—an error that leads to an unfounded conception of metaphysics. There is no way to demonstrate the existence of a First Principle, which is immaterial and transcendent, except for the way established by Aristotle in the last book (VIII) of his *Physics*, namely, by motion. The end of physics is the natural transition to the beginning of metaphysics, which investigates the simple forms that are separate from matter. The physical proof for the existence of the Prime Mover is the necessary precondition of the possibility of First Philosophy, of which the *subiecta* are the immaterial beings.[116] Averroes supports the "theological" conception of metaphysics and maintains that the study of the highest being, which is the first form and the ultimate end, includes the study of all other beings.

The controversy between Avicenna and Averroes embodies the tension between the ontological and theological determinations of First Philosophy and had a lasting effect on the discussions about the "proper subject" of metaphysics in the Latin world. Its most extensive treatment is to be found in the first question of Duns Scotus's commentary on the *Metaphysics*—his account covers almost fifty pages

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suae, ens absolute non est principium, sed accidit ei esse principium alterius ut creaturae".

[115] On Averroes's criticism, A. Zimmermann, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik?*, pp. 152–154. H. A. Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, New York-Oxford 1987, pp. 311–318.

[116] Averroes, *In I Physicorum*, com. 83 (ed. Venice 1562, in: *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis*, Vol. IV [reprinted in Frankfurt am Main 1962], f. 47rF–vG): "Sed notandum est, quod istud genus entium, esse, scilicet separatum a materia, non declaratur nisi in hac scientia naturali. Et qui dicit quod prima philosophia nititur declarare entia separabilia esse, peccat. Haec enim entia sunt subiecta primae Philosophiae, et declaratum est in posterioribus Analyticis quod impossibile est aliquam scientiam declarare suum subiectum esse, sed concedit ipsum esse, aut quia manifestum per se, aut quia est demonstratum in alia scientia. Unde Avicenna peccavit maxime, cum dicit quod primus Philosophus demonstrat primum principium esse".

in the critical edition: "Whether the proper subject of metaphysics is being-as-being, as Avicenna claimed, or God and the intelligences, as the Commentator Averroes assumed".[117] Virtually all medieval commentators do not follow "the Commentator" but accept Avicenna's position and maintain an ontological conception of metaphysics, without adopting all of Avicenna's reasons for it.

2.4.2 *The doctrine of the primary notions*

Avicenna's doctrine of the primary notions has a place in his *Liber de philosophia prima* that suits its primacy. In the first treatise of this work, the Arab philosopher first deals with what one could call "the Prolegomena" of his metaphysics: its subject-matter (c. 1–2), utility (c. 3) and contents (c. 4).[118] The constructive part of his account in fact starts in the fifth chapter, titled "On Indicating the Existent (*ens*), the Thing (*res*) and their First Divisions", in which he develops the doctrine of the primary notions of the intellect.[119] An explicit connection with the "subject" of First Philosophy is not made by the Arab philosopher. We shall first (i) examine Avicenna's motive for the introduction of primary concepts. Since he lists a plurality of such notions, we will next consider them separately: (ii) the concepts "thing" and "being", and (iii) the status of the concept "one". (iv) An issue which he only treats in passing, but that was extensively discussed in medieval texts concerns the nature of the commonness ascribed to the primary notions: are they predicated of all things in an analogous or univocal

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[117] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum*, I, q. 1 (ed. Franciscan Institute, Vol. III, pp. 15–72).

[118] Cf. A. Bertolacci, "The Structure of Metaphysical Science in the Ilahiyyat (Divine Science) of Avicenna's Kitab al-Sifa' (Book of the Cure)", in: *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 13 (2002), pp. 1–69; in particular p. 22.

[119] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, I, c. 5 (ed. Van Riet, pp. 31–42). On this chapter, cf. the "Introduction doctrinale" by G. Verbeke in the same volume of the Avicenna latinus, pp. 31*–39*. M. E. Marmura, "Avicenna on Primary Concepts in the Metaphysics of his al-Shifa", in: R. M. Savory / D. A. Agius (eds.), *Logos Islamikos. Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens*, Toronto 1984 (Papers in Medieval Studies, 6), pp. 219–239 (with an Engl. transl.). J. Jolivet, "Aux origines de l'ontologie d'Ibn Sina", in: J. Jolivet / R. Rashed (eds.), *Études sur Avicenne*, Paris 1984 (Sciences et philosophies arabes, 2), pp. 11–28 [reprinted in: J. Jolivet, *Philosophie médiévale arabe et latine*, Paris 1995 (Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale, 73), pp. 221–236]. A. de Libera, *L'art des généralités. Théories de l'abstraction*, Paris 1999, pp. 579–590 (with a French transl. of Avicenna's text, pp. 645–653).

way? By way of conclusion (v) we will raise the question in the light of the medieval reception: Is there a doctrine of the transcendentals in Avicenna?

The beginning of thought: "The first impressions in the soul"

The text from Avicenna's *Metaphysics* that is probably most frequently cited by medieval authors is the programmatic statement by which he introduces his doctrine of the primary notions of the intellect: "We therefore say that 'thing' (*res*), 'being' (*ens*) and 'the necessary' (*necesse*) are such that they are impressed immediately upon the soul by a first impression (*prima impressio*) and are not acquired from other notions better known than themselves".[120] Two aspects are noteworthy in his doctrine.

1. Why is it necessary to accept primary notions? The structure of Avicenna's argument does not become very transparent in his exposition, but its basis is an analogy between two orders of knowledge, the order of "assent" (*tasdiq*; in the Latin translation *credulitas*) and that of "conception" (*tasawwur*; in the Latin transl. *imaginatio*). He does not explain these terms which have been called "the cornerstones of medieval Arabic epistemology".[121] But Algazel, who in the Middle Ages was regarded as Avicenna's faithful student, gives a brief description of "the first two parts of a science" in his *Logic*. *Imaginatio* concerns the incomplex knowledge of concepts, such as "stone" and "tree"; *credulitas* concerns the knowledge of propositions, such as "the world has a beginning".[122]

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[120] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, I, c. 5 (ed. Van Riet, pp. 31–32): "Dicemus igitur quod res et ens et necesse talia sunt quod statim imprimuntur in anima prima impressione, quae non acquiritur ex aliis notioribus se".

[121] D. L. Black, *Logic and Aristotle's 'Rhetoric' and 'Poetics' in Medieval Arabic Philosophy*, Leiden – New York – Kebenhavn – Köln 1990 (Islamic Philosophy and Theology, 7), p. 71. Cf. H. A. Wolfson, "The Terms *Tasawwur* and *Tasdiq* in Arabic Philosophy and their Greek, Latin and Hebrew Equivalents", in: id., *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*, Vol. I, Cambridge, Mass., 1973, pp. 478–492. The medievals were aware of the Arabic background of the terminology. See, for instance, Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, q. un., a. 9 ad 6 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXIV/2, Rome 2000, p. 97): "Has enim duas operationes intellectus Aristotiles assignat in III De anima, unam scilicet quam uocat *intelligentiam indiuisibilium*, qua uidelicet intellectus apprehendit quod quid est alicuius rei: et hanc Arabes uocant *formationem* uel *ymaginationem per intellectum*; aliam uero ponit, scilicet compositionem et diuisionem intellectuum, quam Arabes uocant *credulitatem* uel *fidem*".

[122] Algazel, *Logica*, 1 (ed. Lohr, p. 239): "Scientiarum, quamvis multi sint rami, duae tamen sunt primae partes, imaginatio et credulitas. *Imaginatio* est apprehensio rerum,

The analogy Avicenna has in mind consists in the claim that in both orders a reduction to first principles that are known *per se* is necessary. Just as there are first principles, known through themselves, in the realm of assent, so there are also principles that are conceived *per se* and do not require any prior conception in the realm of conception. If one wants to make somebody aware of them, his indication would thus not make an unknown thing known, but would merely draw attention to them or bring them to mind through the use of a sign.[123]

In Avicenna's argument, the first member of the analogy, *i.e.* the order of *credulitas*, is meant to elucidate the other member, because it is the better known; it takes Aristotle's analysis of the finite structure of demonstrative knowledge (*scientia*) in the *Posterior Analytics* for granted. "Science" is grounded knowledge, a *habitus* that is produced by demonstration; consequently, what is scientifically knowable in the proper sense is the conclusion of a demonstration, for such a proposition meets the demand for foundation. From this it follows that science is always derived from something prior, insofar as the conclusion is inferred from propositions previously known. This structure, however, raises the problem of the ultimate foundation of science, for an ongoing "analysis" or "resolution" (*resolutio*) into something prior would lead to an infinite regress. Aristotle solves this problem by concluding that the first principles of science cannot be demonstrated, since the search for a foundation would imply either an infinite regress, which is impossible, or a circular argument. The first principles of science are not derived from something else, but are immediately known.[124]

Avicenna's originality consists in his application of the finite structure of *scientia* to the order of concepts. Aristotle recognizes that the formation of a definition presupposes the finiteness of essential predicates and that the ascent to the most general predicate comes to an end in the ten *genera generalissima* or categories, but he does

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quas significant singulae dictiones ad intelligendum et certificandum eas. Sicut est apprehensio significationis huius nominis, 'lapis', 'arbor', 'angelus', 'spiritus' et similium. *Credulitas* vero est sicut hoc quod dicitur, quia 'Mundus coepit', et 'Obedientia remunerabitur' ".

[123] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, I, c. 5 (ed. Van Riet, p. 32): "sicut credulitas quae habet prima principia, ex quibus ipsa provenit per se, et est alia ab eis, sed propter ea (…). Similiter in imaginationibus sunt multa quae sunt principia imaginandi, quae imaginantur per se, sed, cum voluerimus ea significare, non faciemus per ea certissime cognosci ignotum, sed fiet assignatio aliqua transitus ille per animam nomine vel signo quod aliquando in se erit minus notum quam illud, sed per aliquam rem vel per aliquam dispositionem fiet notius in significatione".

[124] Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, I, c. 3.

not maintain a doctrine of first concepts. For the Arab philosopher it is a logical complement of the Aristotelian analysis that the impossibility of an infinite regress in the order of demonstration and the reduction to a first likewise holds for the order of concepts. Just as propositions must be reduced to first indemonstrable principles, there must be primary notions in the order of conception. "If every concept requires a prior concept, this would lead either to an infinite regress or to circularity".[125]

The Avicennian primary concepts are referred to as the *primae intentiones, primae conceptiones* or *prima intelligibilia* in the thirteenth century.[126] Most authors avoid Avicenna's expression *primae impressiones* because of its epistemological implications; his terminology reflects an extrinsic view of the origin of the primary notions, insofar as they are seen as the direct impressions of the cosmic active Intellect. The term *conceptio*, by contrast, expresses the inner activity of the human intellect in forming these notions.[127]

Avicenna's argument and claim of primary notions aim at a systematic beginning of human thought and realizes an old ambition of philosophy in its search for a first: our knowledge starts from first principles which are presupposed in all subsequent knowledge. It is this aspect that may explain the medieval fascination of his doctrine. Henry of Ghent, for instance, concludes that *secundum Avicennam* and *secundum rei veritatem* there are "firsts" in what is conceived by the intellect, notions that are the condition for all further conceptual knowledge: "Nothing in a creature is known or understood except if it is first known and understood under the intention of 'being' and 'one' ".[128]

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[125] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, I, c. 5 (ed. Van Riet, p. 33): "Si autem omnis imaginatio egeret alia praecedente imaginatione, procederet hoc in infinitum vel circulariter".

[126] For the terminology: *primae intentiones*, cf. Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, q. 9 (ed. N. Wicki, Vol. I, Bern 1985 (Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi: Opera Philosophica Mediae Aetatis Selecta, II), p. 30); Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 24, q. 7 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 144rH); *primae conceptiones*: Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De trinitate*, q. 6, a. 4 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. L, Roma 1992, p. 170); id., *Quaestiones de quolibet*, quodlibet VIII, q. 2, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXV/1, Roma 1996, p. 59); *primum intelligibile*: Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, I, n. 72 (ed. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Quaracchi 1924, p. 113); Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. IV, p. 58).

[127] Cf. Aquinas's critique of Avicenna in *De veritate*, q. 10, a. 6 (see ch. 6.1).

[128] Henry of Ghent uses the expression "*secundum Avicennam et secundum rei veritatem*" in the *Summa quaestionum ordinarium*, a. 22, q. 5 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol.

2. Avicenna's analogy argument is strictly formal; it does not say which concepts are the primary notions of the intellect. He presents a list of them twice. In the opening statement of chapter 5 he mentions "thing", "being" and "the necessary". Later in the same chapter, immediately after the analogy argument, he establishes that "what is most suited to be conceived through itself is that which is common to all things (*ea quae communia sunt omnibus rebus*), as are 'thing', 'being' and 'one' ".[129] Between the two lists there exist some differences, which, however, Avicenna does not discuss.

In the first list, the conceptual primacy is accounted for by the impossibility of acquiring these notions from other and better known notions. This idea implies that the primary concepts cannot be defined. Any attempt in that direction, Avicenna observes, rather conceals these notions. If someone were to say, for example, "the reality of 'being' (*ens*) consists in being either active (*agens*) or passive (*patiens*)", that person uses a division of being that is less known than "being". All men conceive "being" without knowing at all that it must be either active or passive.[130]

In Avicenna's second list, the conceptual firstness is related to the commonness of these notions. That may be the reason that "the necessary" is absent here, because it rather belongs to the first division of "being". In accordance with the title of the chapter that announces such a division, Avicenna, at the end of the chapter, deals with the modal concepts "necessary", "possible" and "impossible". It is striking that, when the medievals quote the opening statement of the fifth chapter, they always leave out "the necessary".

The primary notions are the *communissima*; because of their universal predicability they transcend the most general genera of the categorial order. Hence medieval texts refer to Avicenna's primary notions as *transcendentia* and incorporate their cognitive priority into the

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134vD) and a. 25, q. 3 (fol. 156rS). Cf. *ibid.*, a. 24, q. 7 (fol. 144rH): "Nihil enim talium cognoscitur in creatura aut intelligitur ut tale, nisi prius cognoscendo et intelligendo ipsum sub intentione entis et unius et caeterarum primarum intentionum, ut quod sit ens aut unum".

[129] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, I, c. 5 (ed. Van Riet, p 33): "Quae autem promptiora sunt ad imaginandum per seipsa, sunt ea quae communia sunt omnibus rebus, sicut res et ens et unum, et cetera".

[130] *Ibid.* (p. 33): "Unde quisquis voluerit discurrere de illis incidet in involucrum, sicut ille qui dixit quod certitudo entis est quod vel est agens vel patiens: quamvis haec divisio sit entis, sed tamen ens notius est quam agens vel patiens. Omnes enim homines imaginant certitudinem entis, sed ignorant an debeat esse agens vel patiens".

doctrine of the transcendentals.[131] The impact of Avicenna's doctrine can be seen in two different accounts, that of Aquinas in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, and that of Henry of Ghent in his *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3. Both thinkers prepare their exposition of the transcendentals by adopting the Avicennian analogy between the two orders of intellectual knowledge and the reduction (*reductio*) to what is known *per se* and therefore *notissimum*, the first conceptions of the intellect.[132] Does this mean that Avicenna's chapter on the primary notions essentially was a doctrine of the transcendentals? An answer to this question should be postponed to the conclusion of our analysis.

"Thing" and "Being"

1. Avicenna's exposition in the fifth chapter of the first treatise is focussed on the two primary notions that are mentioned in both lists: *ens* and *res*. The introduction of the latter term is significant, since *res* does not have an antecedent in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. The Latin Avicenna was the origin of the career of *res* in medieval philosophy.[133] But why did this concept enter philosophy and what does it contribute to our understanding of "reality"? Avicenna does not give his motives for the introduction of the term "thing" and confines himself to an analysis of the relation between *ens* and *res*—their conceptual difference and their identity.

In all languages, he states, *res* signifies something different from *ens*. Every "thing" has a "stable nature" (*certitudo*) through which it is what it is. Thus a triangle has a *certitudo* whereby it is a triangle, whiteness has one whereby it is whiteness. The "certitude" of a thing may

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[131] For instance, cf. Anonymus (quidam Scotista), *Duae quaestiones ordinariae de conceptibus transcendentibus*, q. 1 (ed. S. F. Brown / S. D. Dumont, in: *Mediaeval Studies* 51 (1989), pp. 39–129, here p. 39): "(…) per Avicennam, I *Metaphysicae* suae, ubi dicit quod ens et res et huiusmodi transcendentia prima impressione imprimuntur in anima".

[132] Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "What is First and Most Fundamental? The Beginnings of Transcendental Philosophy", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, Berlin – New York 1998 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 26), pp. 305–321.

[133] On the concept of *res* in Avicenna, cf. R. Wisnovsky, "Notes on Avicenna's Concept of Thingness (*say'iyya*)", in: *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 10 (2000), pp. 181–222 [reprinted with alterations in: id., *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, London-Ithaca, N.Y., 2003, pp. 153–180]. T.-A. Druart, "'Shay' or 'Res' as Concomitant of 'Being' in Avicenna", in: *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 12 (2001), pp. 125–142.

be called its "proper being" (*esse proprium*). This is different from the "affirmed being" (*esse affirmativum*) of something, signified by the term *ens*, which is synonymous with *aliquid*—in the Latin translation *aliquid* stands for two Arabic terms that mean "what is established" and "what is realized".[134] The terminology is remarkable: *certitude* means an ontological "stability"—in the concluding summary of his account Avicenna describes the *certitudo* of a thing as its "whatness" (*quidditas*)—,[135] which is the basis of "certainty" in a cognitive sense. With some hesitation (*fortasse*) the Arab philosopher propounds the designation *esse proprium*—an expression that attracted the attention of medieval readers; apparently, *res* has its own mode of being.

What was Avicenna's motive for introducing *res*? The surprising answer is that this notion in itself does not contain anything new. The Avicennian "thing" is related to the *certitudo* of a thing, it signifies its "whatness". *Res* expresses the Greek tradition of intelligibility, which centres on the quiddity of a thing by posing the question as to *what* it is. What is new in Avicenna's account is not the introduction of *res*, but rather the conceptual differentiation between *res* and *ens*, which signifies *that* something is. This differentiation seems to be related to the questions "whether something is" (*an est*) and "what it is?" (*quid est*), but its basis is an ontological difference that is fundamental to Arab metaphysics, namely the distinction between "essence" and "existence".[136] As Avicenna observes, each thing has a *certitudo* proper to it, which is "something other than the *esse* that is synonymous with what is affirmed (*aliquid*)".[137]

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[134] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, I, c. 5 (ed. Van Riet, pp. 34–35): "Dico ergo quod intentio entis et intentio rei imaginantur in animabus duae intentiones; ens vero et aliquid sunt nomina multivoca unius intentionis nec dubitabis quin intentio istorum non sit iam impressa in anima legentis hunc librum. Sed res et quicquid aequipollet ei, significat etiam aliquid aliud in omnibus linguis; unaquaeque enim res habet certitudinem qua est id quod est, sicut triangulus habet certitudinem qua est triangulus, et albedo habet certitudinem qua est albedo. Et hoc est quod fortasse appellamus esse proprium, nec intendimus per illud [*del.* nisi (in accordance with manuscript A)] intentionem esse affirmativi".

[135] *Ibid.* (p. 35): "Redeamus igitur et dicamus quod (…) est hoc quod unaquaeque res habet certitudinem propriam quae est eius quidditas".

[136] Cf. A. M. Goichon, *La distinction de l'essence et de l'existence d'après Ibn Sina (Avicenne)*, Paris 1937.

[137] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, I, c. 5 (ed. Van Riet, p. 35): "Et notum est quod certitudo cuiuscumque rei quae propria est ei, est praeter esse quod multivocum est cum aliquid".

After having shown the conceptual difference between *res* and *ens*, Avicenna emphasizes their extensional identity. *Ens* is a necessary "concomitant" of *res*: "The concept of *ens* is always concomitant with *res*, because the thing has being either in the singulars or in the estimation and intellect. If it were not so, it would not be a thing".[138] There follows an extensive refutation of the view that denies the extensional identity of *res* and *ens* and holds that *res* is the more comprehensive notion, insofar as there are non-existing things.

Avicenna's account of the primary notions left open a question, which turns out to be of importance for the history of its reception. He distinguishes a plurality of first notions, but does not discuss their order. Does the notion of *res* precede that of *ens*? Avicenna does not give an explicit answer; it is, however, significant that he uses the term "concomitant" to express the relation of "being" (and, as we shall see, of "one", too) to "thing". The term suggests a conceptual priority of *res*, insofar as notions that "accompany" "thing" are subsequent to that which is "accompanied".[139] Avicenna's account was read in this sense by some Latin authors. It meant a challenge to the ontological conception of metaphysics, which presupposes the priority of "being".

2. The medieval reception of Avicenna's exposition on "thing" and "being" was diverse. We give three examples that represent different models of interpretation: the priority of *ens* to *res* in Thomas Aquinas, their identification in Henry of Ghent, and the priority of *res* to *ens* in a remarkable fourteenth-century thinker, Francis of Marchia.

A first witness of the penetration of Avicenna's doctrine into the Latin West is Aquinas's account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1 (see ch. 6.1), in which he establishes: "That which the intellect first conceives, as best known, and into which it resolves all its conceptions, is 'being' (*ens*)".[140] Thomas supports this claim by a reference to Avicenna's *Metaphysics*, but in fact he modifies his exposition. Whereas the

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[138] *Ibid.* (p. 36): "nec separabitur a comitantia intelligendi ens cum illa ullo modo, quoniam intellectus de ente semper comitabitur illam, quia illa habet esse vel in singularibus vel in aestimatione vel intellectu. Si autem non esset ita, tunc non esset res".

[139] Contra T.-A. Druart, "'Shay' or 'Res' as Concomitant of 'Being' in Avicenna", in particular the claim on p. 130 that Avicenna "always gives precedence to 'being' over 'thing'".

[140] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, p. 5): "illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum et in quod conceptiones omnes resolvit est ens, ut Avicenna dicit in principio suae Metaphysicae".

Arabic philosopher names a plurality of primary notions, Aquinas sees a conceptual order among these notions, in which *ens* has a clear priority: "Being" is the first transcendental and *primum intelligibile*. He gives a place to the Avicennian notion of *res* in his derivation of the other transcendentals and explains the distinction between *ens* and *res* by another reference to Avicenna's *Metaphysics*: the name *ens* is taken from "the act of being" (*actus essendi*), while the name *res* expresses the "quiddity" or "essence" of something.[141] Aquinas interprets Avicenna's concept of *ens* in terms of the "act of being", a phrase that is typical of his own understanding of being as "actuality".

Exemplary for another model of interpretation is Henry of Ghent, the most influential thinker in the generation after Aquinas. In his account of the transcendentals he, like Thomas, establishes, "being" as the first concept of the intellect. But a significant difference from Aquinas consists in Henry's explanation of the *ratio entis*. "'Being' signifies the *certitudo*, whereby everything is what it is in its nature and essence *absolute*, without any qualification (*condicio*) and addition".[142] It is striking that Henry determines the meaning of *ens* through the concept of *certitudo*, because it is the term used by Avicenna in his description of the notion *res*. Henry identifies the concept of "being" with Avicenna's notion of "thing". This identification is typical of his ontology: Henry understands "being" from its essential "reality", not from the "actuality" (see ch. 7.2).

A third manner of interpretation was presented by the Franciscan master Francis of Marchia, a highly original thinker who was active at the University of Paris around 1320 (see ch. 10.5.2). In his *Questions on the Metaphysics*, the first question he raises is "Whether *res secundum quod res* is the subject of metaphysics or something else?"[143] The phrasing of the *quaestio* is noteworthy, since it replaces *ens* by *res* in the traditional formulation of the basic question as to the "subject". In

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[141] *Ibid.*: "(…) non autem invenitur aliquid affirmative dictum absolute quod possit accipi in omni ente nisi essentia eius secundum quam esse dicitur, et sic imponitur hoc nomen res, quod in hoc differt ab ente, secundum Avicennam in principio Metaphysicae, quod ens sumitur ab actu essendi sed nomen rei exprimit quiditatem vel essentiam entis".

[142] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3 (ed. R. Macken, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXVII, Leuven 1991, p. 190): "Et hoc est quod [ens] significat certitudinem, qua est unumquodque id quod est in natura et essentia sua absolute, absque omni conditione et additione".

[143] Francis of Marchia, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, I, q. 1 (ed. A. Zimmermann, in: *Ontologie oder Metaphysik?*, pp. 84–98); analysis of the question on pp. 348–373.

his reply, Francis argues that a property cannot be the subject of this science, because the subject is what the properties are attributed to. The most striking aspect of the argument is his claim that "being" is a property of thing. Marchia appeals to the authority of Avicenna and explicates what remains implicit in his account: *secundum intentionem Avicennae*, the concept of *ens* is concomitant with the concept of *res*. Now the expression "concomitant" implies a relation of "posterior" and "prior". Thus, "being" is not the first concept and consequently cannot be the subject of metaphysics.[144] Only "thing as thing" meets the condition of its subject. Francis does not explain the meaning of "being" in the sense of a property of "thing", but it must signify the actual existence of a thing.

The accidentality of the "one"

1. Beside "thing" and "being" Avicenna lists the "one" among the primary notions. He does not, however, deal with this concept in the first treatise of *De philosophia prima*, when presenting these notions, but in the third treatise which is devoted to the nine accidental categories. Because this exposition sheds light on the relation between the primary notions, it is necessary to take it into consideration for a complete picture of his doctrine. And there is the more reason for that, since Avicenna's view of unity was highly controversial among medieval authors. In their reading, his account seems to contain an equivocity, or at least a lack of clarity. At the beginning of the third treatise, Avicenna mentions two reasons for dealing with unity in this place: unity has much in agreement with the being that is the subject of this science, and it is, in a certain way, the beginning of quantity, that is, of number.[145] But why is it appropriate to treat the metaphysical "one" in the context of the accidents?

With respect to the relation between "one" and "being" the Arabic philosopher makes three statements. First, the extension of the "one"

[144] *Ibid.* (p. 86): "Ex quo patet secundum intentionem Avicennae, quod intentio entis concomitatur intentionem rei. Sed intentio posterior concomitatur intentionem prioris. (…) Ergo intentio entis, cum non sit prima intentio, non erit primum subiectum metaphysicae".

[145] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, III, c. 1 (ed. Van Riet, p. 108). For Avicenna's concept of unity, cf. R. E. Houser, *Thomas Aquinas on Transcendenal Unity: Scholastic and Aristotelian Predecessors*, diss. University of Toronto 1980, pp. 120–198.

is equal (*parificatur*) to that of "being" because *unum*, like *ens*, is said of each of the categories. Avicenna recognizes the transcendental character of the "one" and its convertibility with "being"; they are identical according to their supposit or subject (*unum subiecto*). Second, this does not mean, however, that their concepts are identical. The "one" signifies "what is not divided in act". Avicenna illustrates the conceptual difference between "one" and "being" by pointing out that the many as many is not one, but is nevertheless a being. A third feature spells out the agreement between "being" and "one": neither signifies the substance of any thing.[146] The first two features—the convertibility and conceptual difference—are adopted from Aristotle's account in book IV of his *Metaphysics*. The third characteristic is non-Aristotelian; Avicenna's distinction between essentiality and existentiality also appears to have consequences for his determination of the place of unity.

Avicenna clarifies the third feature by means of a proof for the accidentality of unity. Unity is either said of accidents or of substance. If it belonged to the domain of accidents—the term must in this case refer to accidents in the "categorial" or "predicamental" sense—, then substantial unity would be excluded, and that is "doubtful" according to Avicenna. If unity belongs to the domain of substance, it is not said of substance as a genus or difference, for unity does not enter into the definition that determines the essence of substance. It is rather a "concomitant" (*comitans*) of the substance; consequently unity is said of it as an accident.[147]

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[146] *Ibid.*, c. 2 (p. 114): "Unum autem parificatur ad esse, quia unum dicitur de unoquoque praedicamentorum, sicut ens, sed intellectus eorum, sicut nosti, diversus est. Conveniunt autem in hoc quod nullum eorum significat substantiam alicuius rei". See also the instructive summary in VII, c. 1 (ed. Van Riet, p. 349): "Scias autem quod unum et ens iam parificantur in praedicatione sui de rebus, ita quod, de quocumque dixeris quod est ens uno respectu, illud potest esse unum alio respectu. Nam quicquid est, unum est, et ideo fortasse putatur quia id quod intelligitur de utroque sit unum et idem, sed non est ita; sunt autem unum subiecto, scilicet quia, in quocumque est hoc, est et illud. Si enim id quod intelligitur de uno omnino esset id quod intelligitur per ens, tunc multum, secundum quod est multum, non esset ens sicut non est unum, quamvis accidat ei etiam esse unum; dicitur enim quod multitudo est una, sed non inquantum est multitudo".

[147] *Ibid.*, c. 3 (p. 117): "Dico igitur quod unitas vel dicitur de accidentibus vel dicitur de substantia; cum autem dicitur de accidentibus, non est substantia, et hoc est dubium; cum vero dicitur de substantiis, non dicitur de eis sicut genus nec sicut differentia ullo modo: non enim recipitur in certificatione quidditatis alicuius

Avicenna's claim of the accidentality of the "one" is equivocal, since the term "accident" has different meanings. His thesis concerns the place of the predicate "one" within the Porphyrian order of the predicables. He establishes that unity is neither a genus nor a difference but an accident. "Accident" in the Avicennian sense refers to all that does not belong to the essence of a thing. He underlines that unity is not an accident separable from the subject of which it is said, for it "belongs to the universality of that which is concomitant with thing".[148] Avicenna does not maintain that the "one" is an accident in the predicamental sense, which is the proper subject-matter of the third treatise. Yet some passages in this treatise could suggest that Avicenna's thesis also has an ontological import. So, from the accidentality of unity, he infers the accidentality of number that belongs to the category of quantity.[149]

2. The medieval reading of the *Avicenna latinus* was strongly influenced by the severe criticism of "the Commentator", that is, Averroes, who accuses Avicenna of having confused two distinct types of unity, the metaphysical "one" and the mathematical "one". In his "Long Commentary" on *Metaphysics*, IV, c. 2, he portrays Avicenna as a thinker who "sinned much in holding that 'the one' and 'being' signify dispositions added to the essence of a thing".[150] Averroes next indicates the reasons which led Avicenna astray. (i) If "being" and "one" signify the same, it would be a useless repetition (*nugatio*) to say that "being is one". In order to avoid such a "nugatory" predication, Averroes observes, it is not necessary to suppose that "being" and "one" signify diverse dispositions added to the essence. "We, however, said that they signify the same essence, but in diverse ways (*modis diversis*)". (ii) The name 'one' belongs to the *nomina denominativa*, and these names signify an accident and substance—what is meant by this brief argument will

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substantiarum, sed est quiddam comitans substantiam, sicut iam nosti. Non ergo dicitur de eis sicut genus vel sicut differentia, sed sicut accidens".

[148] *Ibid.* (p. 121): "certitudo unitatis est intentio accidentis et est de universitate eorum quae concomitantur res".

[149] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, III, c. 3 (ed. Van Riet, p. 122): "Postquam igitur unitas est accidens, tunc numerus qui necessario provenit ex unitate accidens est".

[150] Averroes, *In IV Metaphysicorum*, comm. 3 (ed. Venice 1562, in: *Aristotelis Opera cum Averrois Commentariis*, Vol. VIII [reprinted in Frankfurt am Main 1962], fol. 67r B): "Avicenna autem peccavit multum in hoc, quod existimavit, quod unum et ens significant dispositiones additas essentiae rei".

be explained by the medieval commentators. (iii) Avicenna identified the one that is predicated of all categories with the one that is the principle of number. Number is an accident; "therefore, this man held that the one signifies an accident".[151] The last mistake was unmistakably Avicenna's basic error: he fails to distinguish the transcendental "one" from the quantitative "one".

3. Avicenna's conception of the *one* was discussed in two different genres of texts in the Middle Ages. The first setting is logical: Avicenna's thesis was examined in sophismatic exercises, conducted in the Faculty of Arts. A "sophisma" is a proposition that raises logical problems because it appears to be possible to prove both its falsity and its truth. A standard *sophisma* in the thirteenth century was the proposition "Only one (thing) is" (*Tantum unum est*).[152] In the analysis of this proposition the different meanings of the "one" were examined and the convertibility of being and one discussed. One of these sophisms, composed before ca. 1270, revives the controversy between Avicenna and Averroes. Arguments against the convertibility of being and the one are presented as the *rationes Avicennae*—in fact, they are the arguments that Averroes had adduced for Avicenna's position; their refutations are based on the "Commentator's" criticisms.[153]

Avicenna's thesis of the accidentality of the "one" was also discussed in commentaries on book IV, c. 2, of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In his commentary, Albert the Great inserts a "digression" (*digressio*) in which he disputes arguments of *sophistae* against the view that *being*

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[151] *Ibid.* (fol. 67r C–E): "Et iste homo ratiocinatur ad suam opinionem, dicendo quod, si unum et ens significant idem, tunc dicere ens est unum esset nugatio, quasi dicere unum est unum, aut ens est ens (…). Nos autem diximus, quod significant eandem essentiam, sed modis diversis, non dispositiones diversas essentiae additas (…). Et fecerunt errare illum hominem res, quarum quaedam est, quia innuit hoc nomen unumde genere nominum denominativorum, et ista nomina significant accidens, et substantiam (…). Et etiam, quia existimavit, quod unum dictum de omnibus praedicamentis, est illud unum quod est principium numerorum. Numerus autem est accidens. Unde opinatus fuit iste, quod hoc nomen unum significat accidens in entibus".

[152] S. Ebbesen, "*Tantum unum est.* 13th-Century Sophismatic Discussions around the Parmenidean Thesis", in: *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995), pp. 175–199.

[153] Cf. A. de Libera, "D'Avicenne à Averroès, et retour. Sur les sources arabes de la théorie scolastique de l'un transcendantal", in: *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 4 (1994), pp. 141–179, in particular pp. 156–157. De Libera discusses the anonymous sophism "*Tantum unum est*", contained in the *Collectio secunda* of the Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 16135.

and the *one* are one and the same nature.[154] It seems plausible that Albert is referring to the sophismatic texts here. Like the *sophistae*, he ascribes to Avicenna a series of objections against the convertibility of being and one, among which the *nugatio* argument, the argument that *one* added to *being* is a denominative noun (that signifies a form, added to what is denominated) and that the *one* is the principle of number and thus an accident. In Albert's view, these objections are, however, easy to refute. At the conclusion of his excursus he tempers his criticism of Avicenna. The Arabic philosopher is to be excused (*excusare*). On closer scrutiny of his statements it becomes clear that he intended to say the same as Aristotle, namely that *being* and the *one* signify one and the same nature.[155]

Thomas Aquinas, in his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, follows Averroes's reading and is less reserved in his critique of Avicenna.[156] Avicenna held that the "one" adds something real to the essence of a thing because he identified the one that is convertible with being with the one that is the principle of number. But this view is false, since that which is transcendental is not determinated to a special category: "Nothing that is in a determinate category is consequent upon all beings". The one that is the principle of number belongs to the category of quantity and therefore cannot be convertible with being in general (*ens universale*). Moreover, Avicenna confuses two distinct kinds of unity. Aquinas distinguishes more clearly than his contemporaries between the metaphysical *one* and the mathematical *one*. The transcendental "one" that is convertible with "being" adds something to "being" which is merely conceptual, namely the negation of division. The "one" signifies that which is undivided. These two features—real identity and conceptual difference—constitute the

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[154] Albert the Great, *Metaphysica*, IV, tract. 1, c. 5 (ed. B. Geyer, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XVI/1, Münster 1960, pp. 166–167): "Et est digressio declarans solutionem rationum sophistarum inductarum ad hoc quod ens et unum non sint natura una et eadem". Cf. A. Bertolacci, "Albert the Great, Metaphysica IV, 1, 5: From the *refutatio* to the *excusatio* of Avicenna's Theory of Unity", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, pp. 881–887.

[155] Albert the Great, *Metaphysica*, IV, tract. 1, c. 5 (ed. Geyer, p. 167): "Et facile est per haec quae hic dicta sunt, excusare dicta Avicennae, quia pro certo, si quis subtiliter dicta sua respiciat, dicere intendit quod hic dictum est".

[156] Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Metaphysicorum*, lect. 2, nn. 556–60. Cf. T. O'Shaughnessy, "St. Thomas and Avicenna on the Nature of the One", in: *Gregorianum* 41 (1960), pp. 665–679. J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals. The Case of Thomas Aquinas*, New York – Köln 1996 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 52), pp. 212–218.

thirteenth-century model for the interpretation of the relation between the transcendentals. The "one" that is the principle of number, by contrast, adds something real to that of which it is predicated; because of its negation of quantitative division, this *one* has the property of being measure (*mensura*).[157] Avicenna, Aquinas concludes, was deceived by "the equivocity of the one".[158]

In comparison to the critical trend in the thirteenth-century commentaries, Duns Scotus's attitude is different. His approach in his commentary on book IV of the *Metaphysics* can be described as a return to Avicenna; sympathy for his position runs like a thread through Scotus's treatment of the question: "Do being and one signify the same nature?"[159] Central in this *quaestio*, which covers more than forty pages in the modern critical edition, is actually not Aristotle's exposition but Avicenna's account of the relation between being and one (see ch. 9.5.1). Scotus discusses Aristotle's arguments for the convertibility from Avicenna's perspective (*sustinendo opinionem Avicennae*), adduces objections to Avicenna's arguments, formulates answers to these objections, and finally presents his own solution. He concludes that "being" and "one" are not essentially convertible and explains this conclusion by referring to Avicenna's argument that if "one" were essentially the same as "being", the many as many would be nothing.[160]

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[157] Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Metaphysicorum*, lect. 2, n. 559 (ed. Cathala, pp. 155–156): "De uno autem non videtur esse verum, quod sit idem quod convertitur cum ente, et quod est principium numeri. Nihil enim quod est in determinato genere videtur consequi omnia entia. Unde unum quod determinatur ad speciale genus entis, scilicet ad genus quantitatis discretae, non videtur posse cum ente universali converti (…)". *Ibid*., n. 560 (p. 156): "Unum igitur quod est principium numeri, aliud est ab eo quod cum ente convertitur. Unum enim quod cum ente convertitur, ipsum ens designat, superaddens indivisionis rationem, quae, cum sit negatio vel privatio, non ponit aliquam naturam enti additam. Et sic in nullo differt ab ente secundum rem, sed solum ratione (…). Unum vero quod est principium numeri addit supra substantiam, rationem mensurae, quae est propria passio quantitatis, et primo invenitur in unitate".

[158] Thomas Aquinas, *In X Metaphysicorum*, lect. 3, n. 1981 (ed. Cathala, p. 471): "Hoc autem non considerans Avicenna posuit quod unum et ens sunt praedicata accidentalia, et quod significant naturam additam supra ea de quibus dicuntur. Deceptus enim fuit ex aequivocatione unius".

[159] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum*, IV, q. 2 (ed. Franciscan Institute, Vol. III, pp. 321–363). Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Being and One: The Doctrine of the Convertible Transcendentals in Duns Scotus", in: *Franciscan Studies* 56 (1998) [= G. A. Wilson / T. B. Noone (eds.), *Essays in Honor of Girard Etzkorn*], pp. 47–64.

[160] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum*, IV, q. 2, n. 66 (ed. Franciscan Institute, Vol. III, p. 335): "Dicendum est ad quaestionem, quod non convertuntur propter rationem tactam, quae (…) fuit prima pro opinione Avicennae".

The reason for Scotus's positive evaluation of Avicenna's conception of the "one" has to be sought in his new understanding of the relation between being and the convertible transcendentals. According to Scotus there is not a merely conceptual difference between them, but a real non-identity, because a property is really distinct from its subject. He considers the Arab philosopher a proponent of this view; his claim of the accidentality of the "one" expresses that the "one" does not belong to the essence of the subject.

The commonness of the primary notions: Analogical or Univocal?

Avicenna relates the cognitive firstness of the notions "being", "thing" and "one" to their universal predicability; they signify "hat which is common to all things". But of what nature is their commonness: are the primary notions predicated of things according to an analogical or a univocal community? The issue has a modest place in Avicenna's *Metaphysics*, but was extensively discussed by a number of medieval authors.[161] Interestingly, Avicenna was seen as an adherent of the analogy of being by some of them, by others as a supporter of the univocity of this concept. Both views can be traced back to different aspects of his doctrine of the primary notions.

1. In the fifth chapter of the first treatise, Avicenna also makes some remarks on the unity of the concept of "being". Like Porphyry in his *Isagoge*, he reminds us that "being" is not a genus, but this fact does not lead the Arab philosopher to the conclusion that "being" is said equivocally. Even if "being" is not predicated of its inferiors in an equal way, it still is a notion in which its inferiors "agree" (*conveniunt*) by means of priority and posteriority (*secundum prius et posterius*). The "congruence" is explained in the sense of a "focal meaning": "Being" first belongs to the quiddity which is substance, and then to the accidents. Avicenna's intention is to show that the unity he had assigned to the concept of being is sufficient for the possibility of a science of metaphysics. Since "being" is one intention, he concludes, there must be a science that studies being, just as there must be a science of what is "healthy". Avicenna's aim is not different from the Philosopher's

[161] The classic study on this issue is S. F. Brown, "Avicenna and the Unity of the Concept of Being. The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Gerard of Bologna and Peter Aureoli", in: *Franciscan Studies* 25 (1965), pp. 117–150.

argument in book IV of the *Metaphysics*, based on the *pros hen* predication of "being". His use of the example of "healthy" strengthens the Aristotelian overtones of his exposition, but, stronger than Aristotle, Avicenna stresses that "being" is one concept (*una intentio*).[162]

In some recent studies, Avicenna's account has been presented as a fundamental stage in the process resulting in the medieval doctrine of "analogy". Alain de Libera has claimed that "the founding text of the 'Aristotelian' theory of the analogy of being" actually was this passage from Avicenna's *Metaphysics*.[163] This thesis exaggerates the historical importance of this account: neither do the doctrines of analogy make any reference to this text nor do Avicenna's remarks play a role in his conception of metaphysics.[164] The medieval witness to which de Libera appeals is Albert the Great. It is true, as we have seen (sect. 2.2), that this author, in his commentary on *De praedicabilibus*, refers to the *Arabes* in support of the view that transcendental notions are predicated according to priority and posteriority.

Albert does not specify the Arab authors he has in mind, but a text that had an obvious influence on his work was the *Logic* of Algazel—the work is "Avicennian", since it is an extract of the logical part of Avicenna's philosophical encyclopaedia, which was not translated into Latin.[165] Algazel presents five manners (*modi*), in which words can be related to things: *univoca, diversivoca, multivoca, aequivoca* and *convenientia*. The contrast to the "topics" in the opening chapter of the *Categories*, in which Aristotle distinguishes only three types—"equivocals", "univocals" and "denominatives"—, is striking. Algazel eliminates the *denominativa* and introduces three new modes: *diversivoca* (many names for one and the same thing), *multivoca* (diverse

[162] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, I, c. 5 (ed. Van Riet, p. 40): "Dicemus igitur nunc quod quamvis ens, sicut scisti, non sit genus nec praedicatum aequaliter de his quae sub eo sunt, tamen est intentio in qua conveniunt secundum prius et posterius; primum autem est quiditati quae est in substantia, deinde ei quod est post ipsam. Postquam autem una intentio est ens (…) ideo eget aliqua scientia in qua tractetur de eo, sicut omni sanativo necessaria est aliqua scientia".

[163] A. de Libera, "Les sources gréco-arabes de la théorie médiévale de l'analogie de l'être", in: *Les Etudes philosophiques* 3–4 (1989), pp. 319–345, in particular p. 333.

[164] Cf. S. D. Dumont, "Scotus's Doctrine of Univocity and the Medieval Tradition of Metaphysics", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, pp. 193–212, in particular p. 200.

[165] Algazel, *Logica* (ed. Lohr, pp. 223–290). De Libera himself pointed out the importance of this text: "Les sources gréco-arabes de la théorie médiévale de l'analogie de l'être", pp. 330–332.

names for diverse things) and *convenientia* (names related by "agreement"). The last type is the most interesting one, since it recalls Avicenna's terminology. *Convenientia* stand midway between *aequivoca* and *univoca*, for instance "being" said of substance and accident. They are not equivocals, because the latter do not agree in any meaning of the term, but substance and accident agree in "being". They are not univocals, because a univocal term belongs equally, indifferently and in the same way to several things, but "being" belongs to substance first, then to an accident; hence "being" belongs to them *secundum prius et posterius*.[166] Albert the Great adopts the division into five types of "names" from Algazel's *Logic*, but makes one important addition. He designates what the Arabs call *convenientia* as "*analoga* that are said according to a proportion".[167]

2. Duns Scotus presents Avicenna as a proponent of the univocity of the concept of being, since he holds that being is said of everything according to one *ratio*.[168] This interpretation seems odd in the light of the "Arabic" theory of *convenientia* ("analogy") just discussed. But Scotus's reading is not unintelligible, for Avicenna's doctrine of the primary notions seems to imply a moment of univocity, when, unlike Aristotle, he claims that "being" is conceived prior to any other notion and is one intention. Scotus's strongest proof for the univocity of the concept of being is motivated by the idea of cognitive priority and plainly inspired by Avicenna's observation in his *Metaphysics*, I, c. 5: "All men conceive 'being' without knowing at all that it must be either active or passive". Scotus's argument is based on the principle that we cannot be both certain and doubtful about the same thing at the same time. An intellect certain about one concept, but doubtful about others, has a concept about which it is certain different from the concepts about which it is doubtful. But we can be certain that something is a

[166] *Ibid.* (p. 246): "*Convenientia* sunt media inter univoca et aequivoca, ut 'ens', quod dicitur de substantia et accidente. Non enim est sicut haec dictio 'canis'. Ea enim quae appellantur 'canis' non conveniunt in aliqua significatione canis. Esse vero convenit substantiae et accidenti. Nec sunt sicut univoca. Animalitas enim aeque convenit equo et homini indifferenter et eodem modo. Esse vero prius habet substantia; deinde accidens, mediante alio. Ergo est eis esse secundum prius et posterius".

[167] Albert the Great, *De Praedicabilibus*, tract. 1, c. 5 (ed. Borgnet, Vol. 1, p. 11).

[168] Cf. E. Gilson, "Avicenne et le point de départ de Duns Scot", in: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 2 (1927), pp. 89–149, in particular pp. 110–117. Cf. Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum*, IV, q. 1, nn. 31–32 (ed. The Franciscan Institute, Vol. III, pp. 301–302).

being while doubting whether it is a substance or an accident. Therefore, the concept of being is different from the concept of substance or of accident, and hence univocal to both.[169]

The *Avicenna latinus* appears to have various faces. His teaching on the firstness and commonness of the concept of "being" was understood in different senses. Avicenna's explicit statement on the "congruence" (*convenientia*) of "being" was read as a doctrine of analogy in the thirteenth century. On the other hand, his doctrine of "being" as the primary conception of the intellect seems to imply a univocal moment in the concept of "being" and was interpreted as a doctrine of univocity in the fourteenth century. The Scholastic interpretations reflect a fundamental reorientation in medieval philosophy itself, which can be described as a turn of an analogical to a univocal understanding of being.

Conclusion: A doctrine of the transcendentals in Avicenna?

A major innovation in Avicenna's *Liber de philosophia prima* is the doctrine of the primary notions of the intellect, including the introduction of the concept *res* that is different from "being". There cannot be any doubt that "the second beginning of metaphysics" through Avicenna played a decisive role in the constitution of a systematic doctrine of the transcendentals in the Middle Ages.[170] Understandably, some scholars have held that the Avicennian doctrine of the primary notions really is a doctrine of the transcendentals, and have even seen his teaching as "the basis of the Scholastic doctrine".[171] What is

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[169] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, n. 27 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. III, Vatican 1954, p. 18).

[170] I agree with J. F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, Paris 1990, p. 349: "(…) la tradition issue d'Avicenne nous parait décisive pour comprendre la constitution d'une systématique transcendantale (…)".

[171] A. Bertolacci, *Avicenna ed Averroè come fonti del Commento di Alberto Magno alla 'Metafisica' di Aristotele: la dottrina dei trascendentali nei commentatori arabi di Aristotele e nel XIII secolo latino*, Università degli Studi di Firenze 1998 [Doctoral Thesis], chap. 2: "La dottrina dei trascendentali in Avicenna", pp. 65–107. I am grateful to the author for sending me a copy of this chapter. Cf. J. Janssens, "Elements of Avicennian Metaphysics in the *Summa*", in: G. Guldentops / C. Steel (eds.), *Henry of Ghent and the Transfomation of Scholastic Thought. Studies in Memory of Jos Decorte*, Leuven 2003 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, 31), pp. 41–59. The author claims (p. 52) that "the Avicenna latinus formed the direct basis of the Scholastic doctrine of the four transcendentals, usually designated by the terms *ens, unum, bonum* and *verum*" by showing that the Avicennian notion of *necesse* can be linked to *bonum*, the notion of *res* to *verum*.

usually credited to medieval philosophy should instead be regarded as an achievement of Arabic philosophy. Avicenna is more than a source of transcendental thought; he is its author.

Yet his doctrine of the primary notions is not a theory of the transcendentals as it was developed in the Middle Ages. What is absent in Avicenna is an account of the inner relations and order between these notions. He explains that "being" and "one" are on a par: they agree in that neither signifies the essence of a thing; they add something to "thing" in the manner of an accident. The distinction between the mutual relation of "being" and "one", on the one hand, and, on the other, the relation of either of them to "thing" finds its expression in Avicenna's terminology. To express the relation between "being" and "one", he uses the term *parificatur*, to express the relation of "being" and "one" to "thing", the term *concomitans*. *Ens* "accompanies" *res*, and the same holds true for *unum*. Avicenna's exposition of the relation between the primary notions is purely *extensional*.

Characteristic of the medieval accounts for instance in the treatise *De natura generis* (see 2.2), Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent is the attempt to derive the other transcendentals from the first transcendental, "being"; they are an inner explication of this first concept, they signify general modes of being that are not yet expressed by the term "being" itself. The *intensional* understanding of transcendentality belongs to the core of the medieval doctrine. An illustration of such an understanding is a brief, but significant text by Albert the Great. After having mentioned the three Avicennian names *unum, res* and *aliquid* (that he regards as a distinct transcendental), Albert derives them from the first notion *ens* in a non-Avicennian way: *unum* adds "indivision" to "being", *aliquid* "particularized being" (*ens particularizatum*) and *res* "stable being" (*ens ratum*).[172] We are not belittling Avicenna's genius by maintaining that the elaboration of a systematic doctrine of the transcendentals is an original achievement of Latin philosophy.

[172] Albert the Great, *In I Peri hermeneias*, tract. II, c. 5 (ed. Borgnet, Vol. 1, p. 395): "Similiter autem est de aliis nominibus, unum, res, et aliquid, ut dicit Avicenna (…), 'unum' addit super ens indivisionem, et 'aliquid' addit super ens particularizatum, et 'res' addit super ens ratum".

2.5 Dionysius the Areopagite and the doctrine of the transcendentals

In addition to the *corpus aristotelicum* and Avicenna a third corpus of texts that had a formative influence on the doctrine of the transcendentals was the work of (pseudo-) Dionysius the Areopagite. The thirteenth century was not only the age of the Aristotle reception but also the century that intensively dealt with the corpus of (pseudo-) Dionysius. The twofold interest was even more than once united in one and the same person: Robert Grosseteste not only translated Aristotle's *Ethics*, but also undertook a new translation of and commentary on Dionysius's writings; Albert the Great commented on all works of Aristotle as well as on the entire *corpus dionysiacum*; Thomas Aquinas composed besides a series of Aristotle commentaries a commentary on Dionysius's *De divinis nominibus*. The fascination for this corpus is also manifest in authors like Bonaventure, Meister Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa.[173]

Dionysius's treatise *On the divine names* became an authoritative text in the formation of the doctrine of the transcendentals. This role may seem surprising at first sight, because the *corpus dionysiacum* was, as we noted in the first chapter (see ch. 1.3), an important channel for the transmission of the Neoplatonic philosophy of the transcendent to the Middle Ages. But in the Dionysius reception of the thirteenth century, a connection was established between the fact that "being", "one", "true" and "good" are divine names and that they are transcendental terms; the transcendence of the divine was linked with the idea of transcendentality. This role of a work belonging to the Christian-Platonic tradition is also significant, insofar as the doctrine of the transcendentals had an anti-Platonic origin in Aristotle's criticism of Plato's Idea of the Good. The Dionysian influence explains the incorporation of a number of typically Platonic topics: the primacy of the

[173] On the Dionysius reception in the thirteenth century, H. F. Dondaine, *Le Corpus Dionysien de l'Université de Paris au XIII^e siècle*, Rome 1953 (Storia e Letteratura. Raccolta di Studi e Testi, 44). B. Faes de Mottoni, *Il 'Corpus Dionysianum' nel Medoevo, Rassegna di studi: 1900–1972*, Bologne 1977 (Pubblicazioni del centro di studio per la storia della storiografia filosofica 3). A good insight into recent scholarship is provided by two collective volumes: Y. de Andia (ed.), *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident*, Paris 1997 (Etudes Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité, 151). T. Boiadjiev / G. Kapriev / A. Speer (eds.), *Die Dionysius-Rezeption im Mittelalter*, Turnhout 2000 (Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale, 9).

good, the introduction of the notion of "beautiful" and the theological understanding of analogy.

The divine names and the transcendentals

The *transcensus* typical of the Platonic way of thought is different from the transcending movement proper to the doctrine of the transcendentals. Dionysius's interest concerns the divine names, not what is common to all things, the *communissima*. The possibility of connecting the Platonic-Dionysian perspective with the transcendental perspective lies in an onto-theological conception of metaphysics, which assimilates the idea of divine causality that determines Dionysius's account of the divine names. There exists a proportion between the causality of the first cause and the universality of its effect: Just because the highest cause is beyond every thing, its effect extends to all that is. The Areopagite explicitly posits the universal extension of the good in chapter 4: "there is no being that does not participate in the good and beautiful"; and of the one in chapter 13: "there is no being that does not participate in the one".[174] The causality of the transcendent is, one could say, "transcendental". Thirteenth-century authors read Dionysius's affirmations as an expression of the convertibility of these terms. Bonaventure maintains that "being and the good are convertible with one another, *sicut vult Dionysius*". And the *Summa* attributed to Alexander of Hales appeals to Dionysius for the convertibility of being and one, not to Aristotle.[175]

The clearest example of connecting the Dionysian perspective with the thirteenth-century conception of "transcendental" is provided by the prologue of Aquinas's commentary on *De divinis nominibus* (see ch. 6.5.2). In this prologue, he analyzes the Platonic method of reducing things that are composed and material to "abstract" principles, that is, to separate Forms. He rejects the Platonic reduction, insofar as it is applied to the relation of particular things to their natural species. But he recognizes the legitimacy of the Platonic approach with respect

[174] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De divinis nominibus* (in the Latin translation of Johannes Saracenus), c. 4, n. 7 (ed. P. Chevalier, in: *Dionysiaca*, Vol. I, Paris 1937, p. 185): "Non est aliquid existentium quod non participet pulchro et bono"; *ibid.*, c. 13, n. 2 (p. 540): "Nihil enim existentium est non participans uno".

[175] Bonaventure, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 1, a. 1, q. 2, fundam. 2 (ed. Collegium S. Bonaventurae, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. I, Quaracchi 1882, p. 32a). Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, I, n. 73 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 115).

to "what is most common" (*maxime communia*), namely, "good", "one" and "being", that is, the transcendentals. There is a first principle, which is good, one and being by its essence; all other things are called "good", "one", and "being" because of their "derivation" (*derivatio*) from the first principle[176]—Aquinas mentions three "Dionysian" transcendentals; he does not include "truth", which is understandable, for this name plays a subordinate role in Dionysius's work. Thomas's acceptance of the Platonic-Dionysian way of thought is rooted in his onto-theological conception of metaphysics, in which the relation of God to the subject of this science, *ens commune*, is a causal one.

One of the few fourteenth-century thinkers who commented on the Dionysian corpus was the Scotist Francis of Meyronnes (d. 1328). He is also the author of the first separate treatise on the transcendentals in the Middle Ages, the *Tractatus de transcendentibus* (see ch. 10.2), and a sharp critic of Aristotle, "the worst metaphysician" (*pessimus metaphysicus*).[177] When discussing the concept of *transcendens* in his treatise, Meyronnes questions the common opinion that identifies "transcendental" with "what goes round every genus". As a counter-argument he advances the idea that "all that is in God is *transcendens*", although it is not common to all genera, and sustains this claim by an explicit reference to Dionysius's *On the divine names*.[178]

The primacy of the "good"

The primary divine name for Dionysius is the "Good". He starts his account with the observation that the "theologians", that is the sacred writers, "have preeminently set apart the name 'Good' from all other names for the supra-divine God"—the biblical basis certainly is the text in Matthew 19,17: "Nobody is good but God alone". The reason for the attribution of this name is that the essential Good extends goodness into all things, a process that Dionysius, like Plato, elucidates by the analogy of the sun ("the image" of the divine goodness). Just as the sun illuminates, by its being, what is able to participate in its light, so

[176] Thomas Aquinas, *In De divinis nominibus*, prooem.

[177] Francis of Meyronnes, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 47, q. 3 (ed. Venice 1520, fol. 134rbF).

[178] Francis of Meyronnes, *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, a. 1 (ed. H. Möhle, Leuven 2004 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales. Bibliotheca, 7), p. 108).

does the good, by its essence, send in an "analogical" manner the rays of its entire goodness to everything.[179]

Dionysius's explanation of the name is based on a metaphysics of the good, which underlines the productivity of the good: It belongs to the nature of the good to communicate or to diffuse itself—an idea expressed in the Middle Ages by the axiom *bonum est diffusivum sui*.[180] The name "Good" is prior to "Being", because the actual source of God's power is his goodness and this name manifests most fully the processions of the creatures from God. The causality of the Good is more universal than that of Being, since it extends to what is and to what is not, by which Dionysius means what is formless, whereas the causality of Being extends only to what is.[181]

The Dionysius reception brought about a debate on the order of the divine names: Is 'He who is' (*qui est*)—the name that refers to God's self-revelation in Exodus 3,14 (*Ego sum qui sum*)—the primary name or rather the 'Good'? The question became a topos in Scholastic accounts of the divine names, for instance, in Bonaventure, Albert the Great and Aquinas. An early example is the *Summa aurea* of William of Auxerre (written ca. 1220–25), whose exposition is determined by the opposition (*contrarietas*) that seems to exist between John of Damascus, who holds on to the priority of the name 'Being', and Dionysius the Areopagite.[182] The controversy cannot simply be decided by exegetical considerations; its resolution must uncover the metaphysical presuppositions of the opposition between "being" and "good".

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[179] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, n. 1 (ed. B. R. Suchla, in: *Corpus dionysiacum*, Vol. I, Berlin New York 1990 (Patristische Texte und Studien, 33), pp. 143–144).

[180] Cf. J.-G. Bougerol, "Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite", in: *Etudes Franciscaines* 18 (1968), Suppl., pp. 33–123, in particular pp. 81–104: "L'axiome 'bonum diffusivum sui' et Saint Bonaventure".

[181] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De divinis nominibus*, c. 3, n. 1 (ed. Suchla, p. 138); *ibid*., c. 5, § 1 (p. 181).

[182] William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, I, tract. 4, c. 2 (ed. J. Ribaillier, Grottaferrata 1980 (Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 16), p. 41): "Secundo queritur de contrarietate que videtur esse inter beatum Dionysium et Iohannem Damascenum. Dicit enim Iohannes Damascenus quod primum et principale nomen dei est *qui est*, sed beatus Dionysius, ut ipse Iohannes testatur, dicit quod *bonum* est primum nomen Dei. Unde in libro *De divinis nominibus* prius agit de bono quam de ente". An example of the medieval discussion: A. de Libera, "L'Être et le Bien. Ex. 3,14 dans la théologie rhénane", in: A. de Libera / E. Zum Brunn, *Celui qui est. Interprétations juives et chrétiennes d'Exode 3,14*, Paris 1986, pp. 127–162.

From the Platonic-Dionysian perspective the "good" is prior to "being", because it is the most common notion; from a transcendental point of view, the good is convertible with being, which has a conceptual priority with respect to "good". Thomas Aquinas adopts this view, but cannot reject the Platonic-Dionysian priority of the "good". In one passage he states that "the good has the widest extension (*amplissimam extensionem*), even wider than 'being', as the Platonists hold". It seems, he adds, that Dionysius in his book *De divinis nominibus* has followed this way of thought by placing the good before being.[183]

In his commentary on *De divinis nominibus*, Albert the Great offers a systematic account of the transcendental terms twice and attempts to justify the Platonic-Dionysian priority of the "good" within a transcendental perspective (see ch. 5.3.2). He argues that the order between "being" and "good" can be considered in two manners. When they are considered with respect to their concepts, "being" is absolutely prior; it is the first conception of the intellect. But when they are considered under the aspect of causality, the "good" is prior to "being", because goodness is the immediate reason of the action of the first cause. Aquinas, too, recognizes that "in causing, the good is prior to being".[184]

The beautiful

A topic that entered into the medieval discussions primarily thanks to the Dionysius reception was "the beautiful". The "Beautiful" is another divine name that Dionysius, in c. 4 of *De divinis nominibus*, explains in close connection with the "Good". He claims the identity of the two names because of their universal extensions: "There is nothing that does not participate in the beautiful and the good". In the commentaries of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas the essential features of beauty and its difference from goodness are examined. Does Dionysius's

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[183] Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, I, lect. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XLVII/1, p. 5): "Circa quod considerandum est quod bonum est numeratur inter prima, adeo quod secundum Platonicos bonum est prius ente, sed secundum rei veritatem bonum cum ente convertitur". Id., *Quaestiones disputatae de malo*, q. 1, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXIII, Rome 1982, pp. 10–11): "Loquendo ergo de bono absolute, bonum habet amplissimam extensionem, etiam ampliorem quam ens, ut Platonicis placuit (…). Et hanc uiam uidetur sequtus Dionisius in libro *De diuinis nominibus*, bonum preordinans enti".

[184] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 3, n. 2 (ed. P. Simon, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXXVII/1, Münster 1972, p. 101); *ibid*., c. 4, n. 3 (p. 114) and c. 5, n. 2 (pp. 303–304). Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 2 ad 1.

identity thesis not imply that *pulchrum*, just as *bonum*, belongs to the number of *transcendentia*? (see our excursus in ch. 4.3: "The transcendentality of the beautiful"). Some thinkers answered this question positively. A fifteenth-century author who calls himself "a minor Dionysius", Denys the Carthusian (1401/2–1471), wrote a treatise on beauty, *De venustate mundi et pulchritudine Dei*. In this exposition he maintains that "according to the commentators on Dionysius" the beautiful, like the true and the good, is convertible with being.[185]

Analogy

The connection of the Dionysian metaphysics of the divine names with the doctrine of the transcendentals intensified the problem of the "commonness" of transcendental concepts. If *transcendentia*, on the one hand, signify what is most common and are, on the other, divine names, how are these two kinds of naming related to one another? The problem concerns one of the structural aspects of the theory of the transcendentals, the question as to the unity of the concept of "being" and of the other transcendental terms. This question was answered in the thirteenth century by the doctrine of "analogy". For the elaboration of one of its crucial elements Dionysius the Areopagite was directive.

A typical feature of the medieval doctrine is that it teaches a *duplex analogia*, a twofold application of the analogy of being and the transcendental terms. In the reception of Aristotle the application of analogy to the categorial diversity found acceptance: "Being" or "good" is said of substance and accident according to a relation of "prior" and "posterior". The reception of Dionysius determinates another, Platonic application of the doctrine, the "theological" analogy, which is concerned with the relation of divine and creaturely being. The Areopagite himself frequently employs the expression "analogy" for this relation in *De divinis nominibus*. "Analogy" is the "proportion" or different "capacity" of creatures to participate in the divine perfections, a capacity

[185] Denys the Carthusian, *De venustate mundi et pulchritudine Dei*, a. 1 (ed. Coloniensium cura et labore monachorum S. Ordinis Cartusiensis, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. 34, Tournai 1907, p. 227B): "Itaque, secundum B. Dionysii commentatores, quemadmodum bonum et verum convertuntur cum ente, ita et pulchrum". Cf. K. Emery, Jr., "A Complete Reception of the Latin *Corpus Dionysiacum*. The commentaries of Denys the Carthusian", in: T. Boiadjiev / G. Kapriev / A. Speer (eds.), *Die Dionysius-Rezeption im Mittelalter*, pp. 197–247.

that determines the place of every being in the hierarchy of things.[186] These elements were included in the "theological" analogy, an original achievement of the thirteenth century.

Critiques of transcendental metaphysics

The connection of the Platonic-Dionysian metaphysics of the good with the doctrine of the transcendentals is, however, only one form of the Dionysius reception in the Middle Ages. In the fourteenth and fifteenth century reactions against this connection become apparent. The work of the Areopagite was read as a philosophy of the transcendent and used for a fundamental critique of the doctrine of the transcendentals.

Such an approach can be found in the commentary on Proclus's writing *Elementatio theologica*, composed by the German Dominican Berthold of Moosburg (d. post 1361) (see ch. 12.1). Directive for his Proclus interpretation is the conviction that there are two opposed positions within philosophy, for which the names 'Plato' and 'Aristotle' stand. The two *praecipui philosophi* held different views of being, the one and the good. Berthold identifies Aristotle's position with the doctrine of the *transcendentia*, which Plato had rejected: There is no convertibility of "being", "one" and "good", but the good is prior and more universal than being. For the priority of the good Berthold refers to *De divinis nominibus*.[187] In the name of Dionysius the superiority of the "Platonic" tradition is defended against "Aristotle's" transcendental philosophy.

In the fifteenth century Nicholas of Cusa intends another *transcensus* different from the one effected by transcendental metaphysics, namely the ascent towards the coincidental principle before all opposites, which he calls the "not-other" (*non-aliud*) (see ch. 12.2). In his writing *De non aliud*, in which he acts as a representative of the thought of Dionysius the Areopagite, Cusanus argues that "not-other" precedes the notions "one", "being", "true" and "good". The transcendentals appear to be transcendable.

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[186] V. Lossky, "La notion des 'analogies' chez Denys le pseudo-Aréopagite", in: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 5 (1930), pp. 279–309.

[187] Berthold of Moosburg, *Expositio super Elementationem theologicam Procli*, prop. 11 A (ed. M. R. Pagnoni-Sturlese / L. Sturlese, Hamburg 1984 (Corpus Philosophorum Teutonicorum Medii Aevi, VI/1), pp. 185–187).

CHAPTER THREE

THE BEGINNING OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRANSCENDENTALS (CA. 1225): PHILIP THE CHANCELLOR

In most histories of medieval philosophy only little room is given to Philip the Chancellor, so called because he was the *Cancellarius* of the University of Paris from 1218 until his death in 1236 and as such responsible for granting the *licentia docendi*. This negligence, however, is inappropriate, for Philip is an original and independent thinker who deserves more attention than he generally receives. His main work is the *Summa de bono*, written ca. 1225–28, the first medieval *Summa* that was organized by means of the notion of the good.[1] It is "our intention" (*propositum nostrum*), Philip states in the prologue, to support what we say with the *auctoritates* of the "holy Fathers" (*sancti patres*) and with the *rationes* of the "philosophers" (*philosophi*).[2] The *Summa* makes ample use of the new philosophical sources and reflects the reception and assimilation of the *corpus aristotelicum*, together with the treatises of Arab thinkers, in the early decades of the thirteenth century.

The first scholar who pointed out the seminal significance of Philip the Chancellor for the theory of the transcendentals was Henri Pouillon. In 1939 he published an article that has since become classic, "The First Treatise of the Transcendental Properties".[3] The title is slightly misleading, for Philip never wrote a separate treatise on this subject. What Pouillon establishes in his study is that the eleven introductory

[1] Cf. M. M. Hervás-Gálvez, *El bien según Felipe el Canciller (1165/85–1236). La 'Summa de bono' en el contexto de la recepción aristotélica*, Pamplona 1995 (Acta Philosophica, 12). N. Wicki, *Die Philosophie Philipps des Kanzlers. Ein philosophierender Theologe des frühen 13. Jahrhunderts*, Fribourg 2005 (Dokimion, 29).

[2] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, prol. (ed. N. Wicki, Vol. I, Bern 1985 (Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi: Opera Philosophica Mediae Aetatis Selecta, II), p. 3). For the dating of the *Summa*, cf. N. Wicki, in: *ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 63*–66*.

[3] H. Pouillon, "Le premier traité des propriétés transcendantales, La 'Summa de bono' du Chancelier Philippe", in: *Revue Néoscolastique de Philosophie* 42 (1939), pp. 40–77. Cf. G. Soaje Ramos, "El Canciller Felipe y la creacion del tratado de los trascendentales", in: *Philosophica* 7 (1984), pp. 47–67.

questions of the *Summa de bono* contain the first formulation of a doctrine of the transcendentals. These questions are:

Q. 1: *De comparatione boni et entis*
Q. 2: *De comparatione boni ad verum*
Q. 3: *De ordinatione veri ad bonum*
Q. 4: *De ostensione summi boni*
Q. 5: *De communitate huius intentionis "bonum"*
Q. 6: *Utrum omni bono opponatur malum*
Q. 7: *De fluxu rerum a Primo*
Q. 8: *Utrum omni creato idem sit esse et esse bonum*
Q. 9: *De hac predicatione: bonitas est bona*
Q. 10: *De differentia boni in creatura secundum quid sumantur*
Q. 11: *De divisione Augustini triplici*.[4]

Philip prefaces his introductory questions with a prologue, in which he states his intention and explains the structure of these questions and the division of the *Summa*. An analysis of this prologue will afford us a better insight into the motives behind the genesis of the doctrine of the transcendentals.[5]

3.1 The prologue of the *Summa de bono*

1. The prologue of the *Summa de bono* is instructive, since it provides a rationale for Philip's focus on the good and his introduction of the *communissima*. He explains his intention by meditating on a text of Scripture, Job 28,1, the Latin version of which reads: *Habet argentum venarum suarum principia, et auro locus est in quo conflatur* (literally: "Silver has beginnings of its veins, and gold has a place where it is sifted"). What does this text mean? Philip's exposition is more a speculative reflection than a scriptural exegesis. In his reading, "gold" relates

[4] For the text of the introductory questions, see *Summa de bono* (ed. N. Wicki, Vol. I, Bern 1985, pp. 3–36).

[5] Cf. S. MacDonald, "Goodness as Transcendental: The Early Thirteenth-Century Recovery of an Aristotelian Idea", in: *Topoi* 11 (1992), pp. 173–186. See also his Ph. D. dissertation: *The Metaphysics of Goodness in Medieval Philosophy before Aquinas*, Cornell University 1986, pp. 205–245. Appendix 7 (pp. 615–629) contains a translation of substantial parts of Philip's questions. N. Wicki, *Die Philosophie Philipps des Kanzlers*, pp. 29–54 ("The doctrine of the transcendental").

to the perfection of practical reason, "the wisdom in morals" (*sapientia morum*), while "silver" relates to the perfection of theoretical reason, "the understanding of questions" (*intelligentia quaestionum*). Apparently practical reason enjoys a kind of priority over theoretical reason, but what matters to Philip is the phrase *principia* in the text, since his *Summa* is a collection of questions: silver has "principles" (or starting points), from which its "digging up" begins.[6] He applies the image of a silver mine to theoretical thought:

> Just as silver is dug up from hidden veins as from its principles, so the understanding of questions is extracted from the commonness of principles (*ex communitate principiorum*). When these principles are not known, the rest falls into darkness. Therefore the faith of those who ignore the nature of the principles has suffered shipwreck, as is the case with the Manichees.[7]

The beginning of Philip's prologue is quite suggestive. Through the metaphor of mining he makes clear that his intention is to go "into the ground" of thought. The understanding of questions must be traced back to the underlying common principles. Obviously Philip sees the good (*bonum*) as such a fundamental principle, for he goes on saying that he will deal mainly with the good, an intention that comes to expression in the title of his *Summa*. Philip shares this interest with contemporary authors. Around 1228, William of Auvergne wrote *De bono et malo* (see 3.6), Albert the Great's earliest writing is entitled *De natura boni*.

Philip's focus on the good must be understood in connection with the explicit mention of the Manichees in the prologue. Their faith "has suffered shipwreck" (a reference to 1 Timothy 1,19), for they "ignore the nature (*ratio*) of the principles". This ignorance derives, Philip seems to suggest, from their denial of the commonness of the good. The continuation of his exposition shows that the Manichaean heresy

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[6] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, prol. (ed. Wicki, p. 4): "Aurum sapientia morum, argentum intelligentia questionum. (…) Hoc argentum habet venarum suarum principia, ex quibus tamquam minerale corpus educitur, a quibus incipiemus. (…) Argentum pertinet ad intelligentiam, aurum ad sapientiam, argentum ad fidem, aurum ad caritatem, argentum ad perfectionem speculativi intellectus, aurum ad perfectionem practici intellectus, id est affectus".

[7] *Ibid.* (p. 4): "Sicut argentum in mineriis ex venis occultis tamquam ex suis principiis eruitur, ita intelligentia questionum ex communitate principiorum tamquam ex occultis venis extrahitur, quibus ignoratis cetera caligine involvuntur. Et ideo 'naufragaverunt circa fidem' rationem principiorum ignorantes, ut Manichei".

is constantly present in the background of his discussion. In q. 6, dealing with the opposition between good and evil, he again refers to the Manichees, who teach a radical dualism of two constitutive principles, the principle of light and the principle of darkness.[8] Philip's interest in the good has a long tradition in Christian thought, to which Manichaeism was the greatest challenge. He frequently refers to the writing *De natura boni*, in which Augustine concluded his polemics with the Manichees by showing that every nature as nature is good.

Yet there is a new element in Philip's account. Later on in his *Summa*, in a question in which he argues that evil is neither a principle nor a genus, he observes that the error of the Manicheans seems to be derived from "the words of philosophers" who maintain that "good" and "evil" are contrary principles.[9] Philip must have had Aristotle's work *The Categories* in mind here, in which the Philosopher, dealing with the different kinds of opposition, presents "good" and "evil" as a clear example of the opposition of contraries.[10] The distinctive mark of this kind of opposition consists in the positive meaning of both of its terms. But if the error of the Manichees has a philosophical origin, it requires a philosophical answer as well. It shows Philip the necessity of going into the "ground of thought", and this all the more because the Manichaean doctrine again became a topic of discussion in the high Middle Ages through the movement of the Cathars or Albigensians.[11] Philip's *Summa de bono* might be regarded as a response to the new variant of Manichaeism.

His own achievement consists in relating the good to three other *communissima*. The good is not the only common principle; as Philip

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[8] *Ibid.*, q. 6 (p. 25): "(…) inducamus quod induxit Manicheus ponens duo principia principium lucis et principium tenebrarum". Cf. R. Nelli, *La philosophie du Catharisme. Le dualisme radical au XIII^e siècle*, Paris 1975.

[9] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, I. De bono nature in communi, q. 2 (ed. Wicki, p. 42): "Sequitur de bono et malo que ponuntur principia rerum, ut magis evacuetur error Manicheorum qui ortum videbatur habere ex hiis verbis philosophorum, prout philosophi ponunt bonum et malum esse contraria principia et contraria genera".

[10] Aristotle, *Categories*, c. 11 (14a 24–25).

[11] Dating from the same period (1226) as the publication of his *Summa* are Philip's sermons that preach the crusade against the Albigensians. See the sermon *De crucesignatione contra Albigenses*, in: N. Wicki, *Die Philosophie Philipps des Kanzlers*, pp. 181–188. Cf. N. Bériou, "La prédication de croisade de Philippe le Chancelier et d'Eudes de Châteauroux en 1226", in: *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 32 (1997), pp. 85–109.

states, "most common are these: being, one, true and good".[12] This is the first indication of a doctrine of the transcendentals in the *Summa*, although the author never uses the term *transcendentia* in his work. Another term Philip employs (see 3.4) for the *communissima* is "the firsts" (*prima*) or "the first concepts" (*primae intentiones*).[13] What the transcendental perspective implies is made clear in q. 2, where Philip opposes his approach to that of the natural philosopher who considers form in matter: "We, however, speak now *communiter*, so that we comprehend divine being that is without matter, rational being, natural being and moral being".[14] The transcendental consideration is comprehensive: it encompasses all domains of reality.

2. After the introduction of the *communissima*, Philip presents a distinction as to their predication. "Being" is sometimes said *communiter* of all things, and is sometimes "appropriated" (*appropriatur*). The term "appropriation" is commonly employed in the medieval theology of the Trinity. It means that some divine properties, such as "truth" and "goodness", although they are common to the Trinity, are yet attributed to one of the divine Persons, since they have a greater resemblance to what is proper to one Person than to what is proper to another.[15] This specific, trinitarian meaning of "appropriation", which we shall encounter in the *Summa* attributed to Alexander of Hales, is not meant by Philip here. He understands the term in a more general sense, expressing the restricted scope of reference of a term.[16] In the present case it means that the *communissima* are treated as proper to God. The distinction between "common" and "proper" is explained through texts from Scripture. "Being" is said *communiter* in Romans

[12] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, prol. (ed. Wicki, p. 4): "De bono autem indendimus principaliter (…). Communissima autem hec sunt: ens, unum, verum, bonum".

[13] The term *intentio* points to the influence of Arab philosophy, for it is the Latin translation of the Arab word *ma'na*, and has the same meaning as *ratio*, the translation of the Greek *logos*. Cf. P. Engelhardt, "Intentio", in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Bd. IV, Basel 1976, pp. 466–474. Cf. A.-M. Goichon, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sīnā* (*Avicenne*), Paris 1938, pp. 253–55.

[14] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, q. 2 ad 3 (ed. Wicki, p. 12).

[15] This is the description of "appropriation" by Thomas Aquinas in *De veritate*, q. 7, a. 3.

[16] See his general understanding of the term in the introduction to q. 8 (ed. Wicki, p. 27): "Sed ante quam loquamur de divisione boni tangamus quasdam questiones, que possunt ad bonum creatum generaliter referri vel appropriari bono nature".

4,17 ("He calls non-being into being"), it is however "appropriated" to God in the famous text in Exodus 3,14 ("I am who am"). "Good" is said *communiter* in Genesis 1,31 ("And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good"), while it is appropriated to God in Luke 18,19 ("Why do you call me good?").[17]

Philip does not tell us why he brings up the distinction between the "common" and the "appropriated" predication of "being", "one", "true" and "good" in the prologue. The reason must be that the appropriation of these terms to God raises problems with respect to the kind of commonness of the *communissima*, for Philip returns to this topic in the introductory questions, as we shall see. From the beginning of the doctrine of the transcendentals the relation between *transcendens* in the sense of predicative commonness and *transcendens* in the sense of the nobility of being is an object of discussion.

3. Philip concludes the Prologue by dividing the eleven introductory questions of the *Summa* into four groups: (i) "First, then, we must inquire about the relation of good to being, one and true". The relations between the *communissima* are dealt with in qq. 1–3. (ii) "After that, whether there is some good to which no bad is opposed, and whether this is the highest good". The proof that there is a *summum bonum* is given in q. 4. (iii) The third group of questions is concerned with the relation between the common good and the good proper to God (qq. 5–7). (iv) Finally, "the division of created good" will be examined (qq. 10 and 11). In his division, Philip skips two questions, which he inserts before the final section: "Are being and being good the same for every created thing?" (q. 8) and "On the predication 'Goodness is good'" (q. 9). Q. 8 is prompted by Boethius's *De hebdomadibus*, whose discussion of the relation between being and good fits quite well into the subjects of Philip's introductory questions. Its incorporation into the *Summa* shows the continuity with the commentary tradition of the Boethian age.

In the next sections we shall examine how Philip elaborates the main issues of the introductory questions: the *ratio* and order of the *communissima* "being", "one", "true" and "good" (3.2); the relation between the commonness of the good and the good that is proper to God (3.3); the designation of the *communissima* as the "first intentions" in the

[17] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, prol. (ed. Wicki, pp. 4–5).

question "On the predication *bonitas est bona*" (3.4); the division of created good, which shows Philip's intention of "a metaphysics of the good" (3.5). Finally we shall discuss whether his *Summa* really deserves the designation "the first treatise of the transcendental" (3.6).

3.2 The *communissima*: Their *ratio* and order

As is announced in the prologue, the first group of questions is concerned with "the relation of good to being, one, and true". Q. 1 investigates "the relation between good and being"; q. 2 "the relation between good and true"; q. 3 "the ordering of true with respect to good". It is striking that no separate question is devoted to "the one". From our analysis, however, it will appear that *unum* is not ignored, but is rather central to Philip's account of the *communissima*.

The good (bonum)

In the first question it is noteworthy that the transcendental commonness of the good is not demonstrated, but presupposed. Philip's true concern is the problem of how "the good" has to be defined. In the next question he shows a similar concern with respect to "the true". As we shall see, there is a philosophical reason for this preoccupation with the definability of the *communissima*. It is an indication that their understanding in the thirteenth century is not, as the terminology could suggest, purely extensional. Just because the *communissima* are coextensive, a central issue was the question as to the different *rationes* of these terms.

Philip starts his discussion in q. 1 with a number of objections, claiming that a definition of the good is impossible. Typical is the first objection:

> The good and being (*ens*) are interchangeable because whatever is a being is good, and the converse. But being does not have a definitional account (*diffinitivam rationem*); therefore neither does the good.[18]

The first premise of this argument states the convertibility of good and being (*bonum et ens convertuntur*) in order to express their real identity. The second premise—being has no definition—appeals to the

[18] *Ibid.*, q. 1 (ed. Wicki, p. 5).

Aristotelian basic idea that being is not a genus. Because the good is as common as being, good is likewise indefinable.

Although a strict definition is impossible, Philip observes that "the good" has nevertheless received "descriptions" (*notificationes*). The first one, focused on the "attractivity" of the good, derives from Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite: "The good is what is desired by all things". The character of the good as an end is also expressed by the formula that Aristotle employs at the beginning of his *Ethics*: "The good is what all things seek". The second description, focused on the "productivity" of the good, is again taken from Dionysius, although it is not, as Philip indicates, found verbatim in his works, but can be "extracted" from his teaching on the good in *De divinis nominibus* (c. 4, 4): "The good is multiplicative or diffusive of being" (*multiplicativum aut diffusivum esse*). The third description has been "extracted from Aristotle and other philosophers", but was in fact constructed by Philip: "The good is what has the indivision of act from potency (*indivisio actus a potentia*) absolutely (*simpliciter*) or in a certain respect (*quodammodo*)".[19]

Philip's reply to the question as to the definability of the good is an example of his intellectual independence. He claims that the third description of the good in terms of "the indivision of act from potency" is the primary and principal concept, despite the fact that the other two "definitions" express fundamental features of the good and are taken from authorities such as Pseudo-Dionysius and Aristotle. He does not explain, however, why the description in terms of indivision is the primary concept of the "good". The reasons for this preference become understandable, when we consider the requirements which the *ratio* of the good must meet.

The description searched for must justify both the transcendental character of the good—the claim that *bonum* is a *communissimum*—and its intrinsic connection with being—the claim that every being is good. To that end, Philip uses the Aristotelian notions of act and potency, which concern the dynamic structure of every reality. The "other philosophers" to whom he refers certainly allude to Avicenna. In the fourth book of his *Metaphysics*, the Arab philosopher deals with "the properties and accidents that accompany (*comitantia*) being", such as "act" and "potency" (c. 2). Avicenna identifies "being in act" with "good" and understands "evil" as that which does not attain the

[19] *Ibid.* (p. 6).

act but remains in potency.[20] From this perspective Philip shows the privative character of evil. Because evil leaves the potency, the opposition of good and evil is not the contradiction of being and non-being, but an opposition "according to privation".[21]

Whereas Avicenna considers "act" and "potency" as "disjunctive" properties of being—every being is in act or in potency—, Philip connects the two notions by means of the concept of "indivision", which is the central term in his definition of the good. His reasons for choosing this term we shall clarify after the analysis of his definition of "true". Philip explains the meaning of the two qualifications "absolutely" and "in some respect", which he adds to the description of the good in terms of "indivision". The former qualification applies to the first being, "for potency is identical with act in the divine essence"; the latter holds for other things, for their essences possess potency and thus incompletion. Only the first being is "pure act".[22]

The true (verum)

Philip follows the same strategy in the second question ("On the relation between good and true") as he did in q. 1. Although "true" and "good" are convertible, they nevertheless have different definitions. He presents five definitions of truth, that of Augustine in his *Soliloquia* (II, 5): "that which is" (*id quod est*); a definition attributed to Hilary of Poitiers: the true is "that which declares or manifests being" (*declarativum aut manifestativum esse*);[23] Anselm of Canterbury's definition in

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[20] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, IV, c. 2 (ed. S. Van Riet, Louvain-Leiden 1977, p. 213): "Manifestum est igitur quia id quod est in effectu bonum est inquantum sic est: quod vero est in potentia, est malum vel ab ipso est malum".

[21] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, q. 6 (ed. Wicki, p. 23): "Advertendum est quod malum relinquit possibile. Unde non dicitur de unoquoque indifferenter. Unde non est talis oppositio boni et mali qualis est entis et non entis, sed hec secundum privationem, illa secundum contradictionem".

[22] *Ibid.*, q. 1 (p. 7): "Dicimus autem rationem illam rationem primam et principalem: bonum est habens indivisionem actus a potentia simpliciter vel quodammodo. 'Simpliciter' dico ut in Primo; in divina enim essentia idem est potentia cum actu. (…) Alia secundum quid habent huiusmodi indivisionem, sed non simpliciter, cum quid sit ibi de potentia et ita de incompletione".

[23] Throughout the Middle Ages (cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a.1; Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3) this definition of truth was attributed to Hilary of Poitiers. All modern editors refer to Hilary's main work *De trinitate*, V, 3 (ed. P. Smulders, Turnhout 1978 (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina, 62), p. 153), but the determination is not found at this place. Pouillon ("Le premier traité des propriétés transcendantales", p. 58) supposes that it was Philip who framed this definition according to

his dialogue *De veritate*: "rightness (*rectitude*) perceptible only by the mind"; the formula "adequation of thing and intellect"; and, finally, a definition in terms of "indivision": "the true is the indivision of being and that which is" (*verum est indivisio esse et quod est*).[24] Which of these definitions, Philip asks, is the most appropriate?

He objects to Hilary's definition, because the phrase "that which declares or manifests being" contains a reference to a knowing subject. The true must be defined "without any relation to an intellect".[25] The definition "adequation of thing and intellect"—which became the central formula for Thomas Aquinas—expresses according to Philip a secondary type of truth, namely, the truth of the sign, because the adequation in question must be understood as that of a mental sign and the thing signified.[26] From these objections it is obvious that he is seeking a purely ontological definition of truth. Consequently, the center of Philip's discussion moves to the relation between "being" and "the true".

Augustine's definition "The true is that which is" seems to be a suitable candidate. Indeed, Philip is of the opinion that this definition indicates what truth is *secundum substantiam*.[27] Yet he is not satisfied with this definition because it insufficiently expresses that by which "truth", qua concept (*ratio*), differs from "being". The statement "every being is true" threatens to become a tautology, if the concept of the true does not go beyond (*habundat*) "being". Augustine's definition must therefore be "articulated", and this articulation gives rise to the fifth definition mentioned by Philip: "the true is the indivision of being and that which is".[28]

Philip regards this definition as the most appropriate one and asserts that "it is taken *a metaphysicis*". The modern editor of the *Summa de bono* admits that he could not find the definition in Aristotle's *Meta-*

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the model of what he considered to be Dionysius's definition of the good ("*multiplicativum aut diffusivum esse*").

[24] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, q. 2 (ed. Wicki, p. 10).

[25] *Ibid.* (p. 13): "Illa autem Dionysii [lege: Hilarii]: verum est declarativum esse data est secundum proprietatem consequentem; verum enim dicitur sine respectu ad intellectum, declarativum autem sumitur in respectu ad vim cognitivam".

[26] *Ibid.*: "illa diffinitio: veritas est adequatio etc. appropriatur comparationi signi ad signatum, secundum quod signum ostendit rem esse ut est".

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *Ibid.* (p. 11): "cum dicitur id quod est tria secundum rationem designantur: id et esse et articulatio et equivalet illi: verum est ens habens indivisionem esse et eius quod est".

physics. He is in good company, for a similar remark was already made in the thirteenth century by Albert the Great. That their search was unsuccessful is not surprising, for it is plausible that it was Philip himself who framed this definition in the light of his systematization of the most common notions. He has borrowed the elements of the definition of truth from two "metaphysicians", Aristotle and Boethius.[29] The notion of "indivision" is taken from the Philosopher, the specification of "indivision" as that "of being (*esse*) and that which is (*id quod est*)" is based on a "metaphysical" composition, explained by Boethius in *De hebdomadibus*. Philip refers to two axioms: "for every simple, to be (*esse*) and that which is are one" (prop. VII), and "for every composite, to be and that which is are different" (prop. VIII). In God, to be and that which is are identical; he possesses indivision in the highest degree (*maxime*), and thus truth in the highest degree. Although in other things to be and that which is are different, their truth consists in the indivision of these components.[30]

Indivisio: *The model of the "one"*

The most striking feature of Philip's doctrine of the *communissima* is his understanding of *bonum* and *verum* in terms of *indivisio*. This negative term, he states, is preferable to *coniunctio* or another positive phrase, because "indivision" is the more universal term. The first, divine being is "true", but it does not have a "conjunction" of being and that which is, since both components are identical in it, and still the first being is true in the most proper sense.[31]

Why is the notion of "indivision" central both in Philip's definition of the "good" (in q. 1) and in that of the "true" (in q. 2)? He gives a

[29] *Ibid.* (p. 10): "trahitur et hec diffinitio a Metaphysicis". Cf. Albert the Great, *De bono*, tract. I, q. 1, a. 8 (ed. H. Kühle, in: *Opera Omnia*, vol. 28, Münster 1951, p. 15): "dicitur quod traditur a metaphysicis sed non perspicue invenitur in libro". On my interpretation Philip's phrase "taken *a metaphysicis*" does not refer to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, but to "metaphysicians". Later in q. 2 (ed. Wicki, p. 13) he states that the definition is taken from "philosophers".

[30] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, q. 2 (ed. Wicki, p. 11). Cf. Boethius, *De hebdomadibus*, prop. VII and VIII (ed. C. Moreschini, in: *De Consolatione Philosophiae—Opuscula Theologica*, Leipzig 2000 (Bibliotheca Teubneriana), p. 188). *Summa de bono*, II. De bono nature intellectualis creature, q. 3 (ed. Wicki, p. 69): "Secundum hoc diverse sunt compositiones (…); alia que est eius quod est ad id quo est, et hec non [pertinet] ad naturalem sed ad metaphysicum".

[31] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, q. 3 (ed. Wicki, p. 19).

hint for his preference for the description of "the good" in terms of "indivision" in a reply to an objection in q. 1:

> The primary definition of the good is given (…) by a difference that consists in a negation; for the *prima* must be determined in this way, as is the case of the one (*unum*).[32]

The definition of "one", "undivided being" (*ens indivisum*), must be the model for the determinations of the other first notions. Philip derived this model from Aristotle's analysis of the relation between "being" and "one" in book IV of the *Metaphysics*, the only relation between common notions the Philosopher explicitly discusses (see 2.3.2): "Being" and "one" signify "the same nature" in the sense that they follow upon each other, but not in the sense that they are determined "by one concept". What is conceptually expressed by "one" is the "undividedness" of being; it adds a negation to being. Aristotle's account became a basic text for the medieval doctrine of the transcendentals. Philip's achievement is the extension of the Aristotelian model of the relation between being and one to the other transcendentals, the "true" and the "good".

The attraction of this model is that "one" adds something to "being" without limiting the extension of "one". "One" retains its comprehensive, transcendental character because it does not add a positive reality but only the negation of division. The importance of this model for Philip's interpretation of the relation of the good to being becomes manifest in q. 1, in his reply to the first objection:

> The fact that good and being are convertible does not prevent one from describing good in terms of being. Even though they are convertible with respect to the extension and scope of their supposits (*suppositorum*), the good goes beyond being conceptually (*ratione*), namely, through the fact that it is undivided from the end or from the act that is called a completion.[33]

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[32] *Ibid.*, q. 1 (p. 8): "Diffinitio enim boni prima (…) est data (…) per differentiam in negatione consistentem; per hunc enim modum oportet prima determinari, ut unum". Cf. *ibid.*, q. 1 (ed. Wicki, p. 7): "Et ita [bonum] non diffinietur per ens et aliquam positionem superadditam, sicut nec unum cum dicitur unum est ens indivisum; 'indivisum' enim ponit ens et privat ab ente divisionem".

[33] *Ibid.*, ad 1 (p. 8): "Bonum et ens converti non impedit quin notificetur per ens, quia licet convertantur quantum ad continentiam et ambitum suppositorum, bonum tamen habundat ratione super ens, scilicet per hoc quod est indivisum a fine vel actu, qui dicitur complementum".

Philip expresses both an identity and a difference between "good" and "being", and his view of the twofold relation between the *communissima* became directive for thirteenth-century thinkers like Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. There exists a real identity between being and goodness to the effect that what is being is good, and conversely. They are identical according to their supposits, that is, extensionally equivalent. But "being" and "good" are conceptually different, the notion of "good" is not the same as the notion of "being". That is the reason why Philip is so concerned with the proper *ratio* of the "good" (and of the "true"). The "good" is more abundant than (*habundat*) "being", since it adds something, namely, the indivision of act from potency. The "good" expresses that the potentialities are actualized, whereas "evil" precisely signifies the division of act from potency, that is, the privation of the corresponding act.

In q. 3 of his *Summa*, Philip examines the order of *verum* and *bonum* on the basis of their definitions. The "true" is conceptually prior to the "good", for the indivision expressed by "truth" only refers to being (*ens*), whereas the indivision expressed by "good" includes the notion of an end and the relation to an end.[34] "One" is the first determination of being, for it only adds indivision as such to "being",[35] "true" and "good" add an indivision of a specific nature. Consequently, the order of the *communissima* in the *Summa de bono* is:

Ens
|
Unum: indivision
|
Verum: indivision of being and that which is
|
Bonum: indivision of act from potency

[34] *Ibid.*, q. 3 (p. 17): "Dico quod verum simpliciter prius est intellectu quam bonum. Et hoc patet ex diffinitionibus. Verum enim dicitur habens indivisionem esse et eius quod est. Non nominatur hic quod non sit ex parte entis, scilicet ipsum esse et id quod est. In ratione autem boni preter esse habetur intentio finis et comparatio ad finem cum dicitur: bonum est habens indivisionem actus a potentia sive finis simpliciter vel quodam modo. Et ita patet quod verum naturaliter prius est quam bonum".

[35] Cf. *Ibid.*, q. 7 (p. 27): "Unum non ponit super ens nisi indivisionem".

3.3 God and the commonness of the good

1. In the prologue, Philip has observed that the good is sometimes said *communiter* of all things and is sometimes "appropriated" to God. How is the relation between what is common (*commune*) and what is proper (*proprium*) to God to be understood? Does the commonness of the good include the highest good, *i.e.* God? This question already influenced Philip's search for the definition of the *communissima*. So he adds to the primary description of "the good", "what has the indivision of act from potency", the qualifications "absolutely", as in the case of the first being, and "in some respect", as in the case of other things. Philip deals with the problem in q. 5: *De communitate huius intentionis* '*bonum*'.

In an objection it is argued at length that the good does not seem to be a reality common to the highest good and the created good. For when the good is said of the highest good, it is identical with God himself. Just as God is not something common, the good cannot be either. Moreover, if the good were common, it would imply a composition of that which is *commune* and that which is *proprium* in God. The objector also rejects another version of the community thesis, according to which the good is common to God and the creature in virtue of a similar relation they have to their effects. If the good were common on this account, both God and creatures would equally participated in it, and the concept of the good would be taken from what comes later (*a posteriori*), namely, from the effects.[36]

Philip does not take the view, as it has been suggested, that the convertibility of the transcendental determinations is only valid with respect to the first being, God.[37] In his reply to the question, he contends that the good is common in the sense that it belongs to God as

[36] *Ibid.*, q. 5 (p. 22).

[37] This interpretation has been presented by H. Möhle, *Der 'Tractatus de transcendentibus' des Franciscus de Mayronis*, Leuven 2002 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales. Bibltiotheca, 7), p. 35. He refers to the *Summa de bono*, q. 3 (ed. Wicki, 18): "Et cum dicitur quod verum et bonum convertuntur, intelligitur tantum de vero quod continuatur cum ente primo". But this interpretation is based on a misunderstanding. The context of the passage is an objection to the convertibility of *verum* and *bonum*. Philip advances the example that was adopted by many subsequent authors: "committing adultery" is *verum, non tamen bonum*. The fact of adultery, he recognizes, possesses *quoddam esse* and the *veritas ostensionis*, but being of this kind is not derived from the first being neither is its truth derived from the first truth. Then the text quoted follows: "And when it is said that the true and the good are convertible,

such (*per se*) and for the sake of itself (*propter se*), and to creatures insofar as they are from him and towards him. The *communitas* of the good is a commonness *secundum prius et posterius*. Philip does not elaborate this point, but makes an implicit reference to book IV of the *Metaphysics* by giving the example of "being" that is said of things according to an order of prior and posterior. It is said primarily of the substance, that is being *per se*, and secondarily and indirectly of the accident that exists in virtue of the substance. His use of this example presupposes that the relation between God and creature is similar. The good said of God can therefore still be common, because it is said directly and primarily of him, indirectly and secondarily of the creature. The terms *commune* and *proprium* relate, Philip emphasizes, to "the mode of saying".[38] The commonness "according to priority and posteriority" he attributes to a transcendental concept, is expressed by later thinkers in the thirteenth century through the term "analogy". It is noteworthy that this notion was known to Philip but is absent here.[39]

2. Another aspect of the commonness of the good and the relation between the divine good and created good is discussed in q. 7: "Concerning the flowing of things from the first" (*De fluxu rerum a Primo*). The terminology again reveals the impact of Boethius's treatise *De hebdomadibus*, for the phrase *fluxus* refers to his solution of the problem concerning the relation between being and the good. The being of things itself is good, since their being has flowed (*fluxit*) from the first good.[40]

This claim brings Philip to the question "why all things have proceeded from the first in accordance with the nature (*ratio*) of good rather than in accordance with the nature of wise, or powerful?" If the

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this is only understood with respect to the true that 'is connected' (*continuatur*) with the first being", that is, the ontological true that is derived from the first being.

[38] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, q. 5 (ed. Wicki, p. 23): "Et haec est communitas secundum prius et posterius (…). Dico ergo quod bonum quod dicitur de Deo indifferens est illi et tamen commune potest esse, quia directe et secundum prius dicitur de ipso, indirecte et per posterius de creatura. Et ibi est accipere 'commune' et 'proprium' quantum ad modum dicendi".

[39] When in a later text in the *Summa de bono*, IV. *De bono naturae intellectualis creature coniuncte corporali*, q. 2.2 (ed. Wicki, p. 189), Philip examines the ways in which "freedom" is said, he explicitly states that predication "according to priority and posteriority" is the same as predication "according to analogy" (*secundum analogiam*).

[40] Boethius, *De hebdomadibus* (ed. Moreschini, p. 192).

first principle is wise, why, then, are not all things wise that have originated from it? Philip points out that a similar question was already posed by Boethius himself. In the final part of *De hebdomadibus*, he raises an objection to the proposed solution, which suggests that if all things are good because they stem from the good, then all things must be just since he who willed them to exist is just.[41] Both Philip's question and Boethius's objection doubt the exclusiveness of the commonness of the good. Why is it that "good", and not "just" or "wise", belongs to the *communissima*?

Boethius had rejected the objection by arguing that "good" is general (*generale*), whereas "just" is special and a species does not descend in all things.[42] Philip broadens this reply by holding that there are "three conditions concomitant with being", namely, unity, truth, and goodness. The term "concomitant" shows the influence of Avicenna, who used the phrase to express the extensional identity of the primary notions (see 2.4.2). Philip relates the three "conditions" of being to the three causal aspects of the first principle: efficient, formal and final, which can be distinguished conceptually, but are one in reality. Every essence has the three conditions concomitant with its being insofar as it is derived from the first being. "Each being is made (*efficiatur*) to be one by the first being in accordance with the nature of unity, to be true by it insofar as it is the formal exemplary cause, and to be good insofar as it is the final cause".[43] Philip establishes a "theological" basis for the transcendentality of one, true, and good; they are founded on the universal causality of the first principle. His argument suggests that because this causality is threefold, there cannot be more but three general conditions of being.

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[41] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, q. 7 (ed. Wicki, p. 26). Cf. Boethius, *De hebdomadibus* (ed. Moreschini, p. 193).

[42] Boethius, *De hebdomadibus* (ed. Moreschini, p. 194): "Amplius bonum quidem generale est, iustum vero speciale nec species descendit in omnia. Idcirco alia quidem iusta, alia aliud, omnia bona".

[43] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, q. 7 (ed. Wicki, pp. 26–7): "Ad hoc dicendum est quod sunt tres conditiones concomitantes esse: unitas, veritas et bonitas. Unitas autem est prima illarum, secunda veritas, tertia bonitas; in idem enim possunt concidere efficiens, formalis et finalis, sed materialis non. Unde unaqueque essentia habens has tres rationes causarum tres habet conditiones que concomitantur esse eius secundum quod est a primo ente, ut a primo ente secundum rationem unius efficiatur unumquodque ens unum, ab ipso secundum quod est causa formalis exemplaris verum, secundum quod est finalis bonum". In the continuation of this text Philip examines why "the one" is attributed to the efficient cause.

3.4 The *communissima* as the "firsts" (*prima*)

The introductory q. 9 is a brief and rather technical question, dealing with a particular type of predication—*Bonitas est bona*—, which is called "reflex predication" (*reflexa praedicatio*), for a concrete term is predicated of its abstract counterpart. But this text is terminologically and doctrinally interesting, since it addresses the *communissima* as the "firsts" (*prima*), and thus touches another aspect of the transcendentals, namely their cognitive priority.

Is the predication "Goodness is good" valid? It does not seem to be the case; Philip refers to the second axiom in Boethius's *De hebdomadibus*, which states that "to be" (*esse*) and "that which is" (*id quod est*) are diverse in created things. The axiom serves as an objection, since it expresses a real composition in things, of which the two components are an *abstractum* and a *concretum*, to the effect that a reflex predication seems to be impossible in creatures.[44]

In his reply, Philip distinguishes between that which concerns the firsts (*prima*) and that which is beneath the firsts (*sub primis*). This distinction has been interpreted as the characteristic distinction of Neoplatonic logic between the First Principle, in which *esse* and "that which is" are identical, and created things.[45] But this interpretation is totally wrong; from the continuation of Philip's account it becomes evident that "the firsts" (note the plural) do not refer to the First Principle in the ontological sense. Noteworthy is the example through which Philip illustrates the distinction he has introduced. Whereas one cannot say *iustitia est iusta*, the predication *bonitas est bona* is valid, because "being", "one", "true", and "good" are the *prima*.[46] The distinction Philip has in mind does not concern the difference between the First Principle and the creatures, but the opposition between the *communissima*, which allow reflex predication, and less common notions, such as "just".

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[44] *Ibid.*, q. 9 (p. 30).

[45] A. de Libera, "A propos de quelques théories logiques de Maître Eckhart: Existe-t-il une tradition médiévale de la logique néo-platonicienne", in: *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* 113 (1981), pp. 1–24; in particular pp. 11–12.

[46] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, q. 9 (ed. Wicki, p. 30): "Respondeo. Aliter est in primis et in eis que sunt sub primis. Non enim dicitur iustitia iusta, prudentia prudens, sed dicitur bonitas bona. Et hoc est quia ens et unum et verum et bonum sunt prima, nam ipsum esse est et veritas est verum et unitas unum".

The connection between commonness and firstness is explained in Philip's reply to the objection that was based on Boethius's axiom. He introduces two different kinds of simplicity: the simplicity of the divine essence, in which "being" and "that which is" are identical, that is an ontological simplicity, and the simplicity of the "first concepts" (*primae intentiones*). These are called "simple", because a resolution (*resolutio*) of them into something prior is impossible; they cannot be reduced to something more general that enters into their definition. This *conceptual* simplicity suffices for reflex predication concerning such terms.[47] Philip's account implies a reciprocity between the commonness and the firstness of "being", "one", "true", and "good". They are the *communissima* because they are the first concepts and they are the *prima* because they are most common.

This ninth question of the *Summa de bono* had a remarkable historical influence: substantial parts of it were reproduced verbatim in the *Summa fratris Alexandri* (I, n. 105); its solution was discussed by Albert the Great in his work *De bono* (tract. I, q. 1, a. 5: *Utrum bonum secundum praedicationem abstractam reflectitur super se*); and the issue of the *praedicatio concreti de abstracto*, which is a distinctive feature of transcendental notions, was taken up by Thomas Aquinas (see ch. 6.4.3).

3.5 The *Summa de bono*: A metaphysics of the good

In the last two introductory questions Philip considers different divisions of the created good. In q. 11 he discusses the influential tripartite division of the good into *species, modus* and *ordo*, which Augustine puts forward in his work *De natura boni* (c. 3); in q. 10 he presents a notable division of his own, which underlies the structure of his *Summa*. This division seems to fit the good, since it understands its transcendentality in opposition to "categorial".

[47] *Ibid.*: "Quod autem Boethius dicit huiusmodi predicationem esse in solis simplicibus, respondeo quod simplex dicitur duobus modis: vel sicut divina essentia est simplex, scilicet quod idem est esse et quod est, vel sicut prime intentiones simplices, et in hiis et in illis per hunc modum est dicere. Prime intentiones simplices dicuntur, quia non est ante ipsas in que fiat resolutio. Ante prima non est quod in eorum veniat diffinitionem. Sed iustitia aliquem habet modum compositionis, scilicet rationis. Ideo in illo non est dicere concretum de abstracto".

In search of the differentiae according to which the good is divided, one could think that there is a strict correspondence between "the good" and "being" in this respect. Since the good follows being (*sequitur ens*), it should, like being, be multiplied according to the diverse categories.[48] This idea is actually based on one of Aristotle's arguments against Plato's Idea of the good in his *Nicomachean Ethics*: "The 'good' is spoken of in as many ways as 'being'"; it is found in all categories (see 2.3.2).

Philip, however, is critical of the suggested parallelism between the divisions of "the good" and "being". In his view it is necessary to distinguish between material and formal multiplication. "The good" is multiplied materially according to the multiplication of "being" in the categories, because "the good" is then considered as that which is good. But a formal multiplication of the good is not in accordance with the division of "being", as is clear, Philip observes, in the cases of "the one" and "the true". The "one", for instance, is multiplied materially according to the division of "being" into the ten categories, but is multiplied formally only according to four modes: unity in the category of substance is "the same" (*idem*), in quantity "the equal" (*aequale*), in quality "the similar" (*simile*), and in place "the simultaneous" (*simul*).[49]

Similarly, the formal multiplication of "the good" *as good* is understood according to its proper *ratio*. The outcome of the preceding questions was that "the good" conceptually adds to "being" the relation of potentiality to act. On the basis of the different modes of "act", Philip distinguishes a threefold good, which determines the division of the *Summa* into three main parts: "the good of nature" (*bonum naturae*), "the *bonum in genere*"—the usual designation of the good that is the end of human action, that is the moral good—, and "the good of grace" (*bonum gratiae*).[50]

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[48] *Ibid.*, q. 10 (p. 30).

[49] *Ibid.* (p. 31): "Responsio. Est multiplicatio materialis et formalis. Secundum multiplicationem materialem multiplicatur bonum sicut et ens, sed non secundum formalem et hoc manifestum in uno et vero. (…) immo multiplicantur tantum secundum quatuor modos. Unum enim dicitur secundum substantiam, scilicet idem, secundum quantitatem equale, secundum qualitatem simile, secundum situm et ubi dicitur simul et ita non secundum decem multiplicatur formaliter; tamen materialem habet multiplicationem secundum decem". Cf. for the division of "the one": Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, V, c. 15 (1021a 9–14) and X, c. 3 (1054a 29–1054b 3).

[50] Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, q. 10 (ed. Wicki, p. 31): "Sed sumitur divisio boni alio modo secundum suas differentias. Cum enim bonum sumatur in creaturis secundum comparationem potentie ad actum, actum autem dicimus hic

The *Summa de bono* comprises the ontological, moral and supernatural good; it does not deal with the highest good, God, except in the introductory questions. In fact, the *Summa* presents an encompassing metaphysics of the created good. This achievement is all the more striking because Aristotle, in his critique of Plato in the *Ethics*, had claimed that there cannot be one single science of all goods, a universal agathology. Philip does not constitute theoretically the possibility of a metaphysics of the good, but advances an argument for the unity of the concept of "the good" that is the sufficient condition for the unity of a science of the good. The "good" is not said equivocally, but *secundum prius et posterius* of the good of nature, the moral good and the good of grace, and is thus said *communiter*, just as "being".[51] Philip's *Summa de bono* is the consequence of this idea.

3.6 The beginning of the doctrine of the transcendentals?

A landmark in the study of Philip's thought was the critical edition of his *Summa de bono* in 1985. It rehabilitated the originality of Philip's achievement, since the editor was able to refute the hypothesis according to which the anonymous *Summa Duacensis* was anterior to Philip's work and was extensively used by the Chancellor for his *Summa de bono*. The relation appeared to be just the opposite: the *Summa Duacensis* is posterior to the *Summa de bono* and a compilation from it.[52] But does Philip's work deserve the designation "First treatise of the transcendental properties", which was assigned to it by Pouillon in his pioneering study? Two contemporary Parisian masters of theology seem to be rival candidates for this title, William of Auxerre (d. 1231) and William of Auvergne (d. 1249).[53]

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complementum, quot modis est dividere actum, tot modis et bonum. (…) Ecce triplex divisio (…)"; *ibid.* (p. 32): "Si autem queratur quare bonum non multiplicatur formaliter secundum multiplicationem entis sicut materialiter, ratio est ex iam dictis, quia bonum addit supra ens, scilicet comparationem ad actum vel finem, et ratione huius fit formalis eius multtiplicatio alia a multiplicatione et entis et unius et veri".

[51] *Ibid.*, q. 3 ad 2 (p. 19): "Respondeo quod bonum non dicitur equivoce, sed multipliciter secundum prius et posterius de bono nature et bono moris vel gratie et ita de aliis et ideo communiter, sicut ens (…)".

[52] See the Introduction of N. Wicki in his edition of the *Summa de bono*, Vol. I, pp. 49*–62*.

[53] Cf. S. MacDonald, "Goodness as Transcendental: The Early Thirteenth-Century Recovery of an Aristotelian Idea", in: *Topoi* 11 (1992), pp. 173–186. C. Gabbani,

William of Auxerre

Philip the Chancellor was acquainted with the *Summa aurea* that William of Auxerre wrote ca. 1220–25, just a few years prior to the *Summa de bono*. In book III, in preparation for a discussion of the virtues, William includes a separate chapter on the good (*de bono*). The good, he argues, must be taken up prior to virtue, since it is placed in the definition of virtue—probably William has in mind Augustine's definition of virtue as "a good quality of the mind". The chapter comprises five questions, the first three of which are:

Q. 1: *quid bonum et quid bonitas*
Q. 2: *que sit differentia inter bonum esse et esse*
Q. 3: *que differentia inter bonum et verum*.[54]

There are some points of agreement between this small set of questions and Philip's introductory questions. William's intention is to place his discussion of the virtues into a more general framework, that of the nature of the good. He examines not only the relation between "the good" and "being" in this account, but also includes a consideration of "the true". Pouillon was of the opinion that "an embryo" of Philip's "treatise on the transcendental" is to be found in the *Summa aurea*.[55]

There are, however, considerable differences between William of Auxerre's account and Philip's project. The latter's introductory questions have the more fundamental intention of providing a basis, not for a particular issue, but for an entire *Summa*. Moreover, Philip's treatment of the relations between "the good", "being" and "the true" is quite different from William's and represents a radically new approach. This becomes clear when we consider William's set of questions more closely.

In his reply to q. 1, "What is the good or goodness?", William does not seek, like Philip, the most appropriate definition of the good, but refers to a distinction advanced by the *sancti*. They divide the good into *bonum in essentia* and *bonum per participationem*. That which is good in its essence is that whose essence is its goodness, and in this

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Le qualità dell'essere. All'origine delle proprietà trascendentali, Università di Pisa 1999–2000 [Doctoral Thesis].

[54] William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, III, tract. X, cap. 4, divisio textus (ed. J. Ribaillier, vol. 3/1, Paris-Rome 1986 (Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 18A), p. 143).

[55] H. Pouillon, "Le premier traité des propriétés transcendantales", p. 72.

sense only God is good. That which is good through participation is every creature. William's interest in the good is motivated by and in continuity with the Christian-Platonic tradition of the Boethian age. The remaining part of q. 1 is accordingly devoted to the question: "Are all things called good by virtue of the first goodness, which is God?"[56]

William's answer to the second question, "What is the difference between being and being good?", shows again that his intention is distinct from Philip's motivation. After having adduced two arguments for their identity and two arguments for their difference, William's resolution of the question consists simply in conceding the conclusion of the last two arguments, namely, that "being" and "being good" are not the same.[57] Neither in q. 2 nor in q. 3, which deals with the difference between "the good" and "the true", one can find something similar to Philip's approach. The Chancellor's preoccupation in the introductory questions is to define "the good" and "the true" in a way that justice is done to both their real identity with "being" and to their conceptual differences. Because the core of Philip's central concerns about the *communissima* is absent in William of Auxerre, we doubt whether "an embryo" of a doctrine of the transcendentals is to be found in his *Summa aurea*.[58]

William of Auvergne

William of Auvergne became a master of theology at the University of Paris in 1223. He was appointed bishop of Paris in the year 1228, an office that he held until his death in 1249. William proves to be an innovative thinker in his principal work, the immense *Magisterium divinale et sapientiale*.[59] It consists of seven treatises, of which the first, the writing *De trinitate*, was composed about 1223 and seems to be another rival candidate of the designation "the first treatise on the

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[56] William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, III, tract. X, cap. 4, q. 1 (ed. Ribaillier, 3/1, pp. 143–148).

[57] *Ibid.*, q. 2 (pp. 148–149).

[58] Neither can we endorse the conclusion of J. Zupko, "William of Auxerre", in: J. J. E. Gracia / T. B. Noone (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Oxford 2003, p. 688: "William's use of transcendental concepts such as being, goodness, truth and unity to express the divine attributes was very influential".

[59] Cf. G. Jüssen, "Wilhelm von Auvergne und die Transformation der scholastischen Philosophie im 13. Jahrhundert", in: J. P. Beckmann / L. Honnefelder / G. Schrimpf / G. Wieland (eds.), *Philosophie im Mittelalter. Entwicklungslinien und Paradigmen*, Hamburg 1987, pp. 141–164.

transcendentals". It has been claimed that *De trinitate* contains "one of the first thematic treatments of the transcendentals".[60]

In the first chapter of this work, William observes that *ens* has many intentions (*multiplices intentiones*) and that the same applies to *bonum*. Like William of Auxerre, he refers to the distinction, derived from Boethius's *De hebdomadibus*, between the good that is said essentially and the good that is said by participation. William argues that *bonum* or *ens* cannot be said of everything by participation, for this would lead to an infinite regress; there must be something of which "good" or "being" is said essentially.[61] I cannot detect any trace of a doctrine of the transcendentals in these considerations. The fact that *bonum* and *ens* are not attributes restricted to finite being but can also be predicated of infinite being does not ipso facto imply a conception of the *transcendentia*.

William of Auvergne shares the preoccupation with the notion of the good with Philip, and his interest, too, is motivated by the challenge of Neo-Manichaeism.[62] A sign for this interest is the treatise *De bono et malo*, written between 1223 and 1228. William starts this work with another reference to Boethius's distinction in *De hebdomadibus* between what is "essentially good"—a phrase that only applies to God—and what is "good by participation". But he wants to examine the concept of "good" in another way, namely by comparing it with the concept of "true".[63]

William relates "the true" and "the good" to the two basic faculties of the human soul. *Verum* is "that which illuminates the intellect" and is identical with "knowable" (*cognoscibile*); *bonum* is "that which moves and attracts the affect" and is identical with the perfection of a thing or the act of its entire potentiality.[64] Interesting is the parallelism that

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[60] A. Ghisalberti, *Medioevo teologico. Categorie della teologia razionale nel Medioevo*, Roma-Bari 1990 (Bibliotheca di cultura moderna, 978), I, cap. 4: "L'uso dei trascendentali in teologia: Il 'De trinitate' di Guglielmo d'Auvergne", pp. 63–81; p. 68.

[61] William of Auvergne, *De trinitate*, c. 1 (ed. B. Switalski, Toronto 1976 (Studies and Texts, 34), pp. 16– 20).

[62] Cf. R. J. Teske, "William of Auvergne and the Manichees", in: *Traditio* 48 (1993), pp. 63–75.

[63] William of Auvergne, *De bono et malo*, c. 1 (ed. J. R. O'Donnell, in: *Mediaeval Studies* 8 (1946), p. 247). For the date of this treatise, which is later than *De trinitate*, cf. *ibid.*, p. 246.

[64] William of Auvergne, *De bono et malo*, c. 2 (pp. 247–248): "Et hoc faciemus sciri quoniam verum proprie est illuminativum intellectus: bonum vero motivum et attractivum affectus (…) et dicamus quia solum verum cognoscibile est et omne in quantum verum". *Ibid.*, c. 4 (p. 250): "(…) manifestum est bonitatem non aliud vocari in rebus, in quantum fines sunt, nisi perfectionem seu actum seu actualitatem et universalem totius potentialitatis ejus".

William posits between the first principles of knowledge and of the will. Just as there are "first impressions" and principles of knowledge that illuminate our intellect *per se*, so there are seminal principles that move our affects *per se*.[65]

The analogy William presents was further elaborated and modified by Thomas Aquinas (see 6.3.2).[66] Thomas sees an analogy between theoretical and practical reason, insofar as both have their own first principles that are founded on primary notions. The first concept of theoretical reason is "being", the first concept of practical reason is "the good". Aquinas provides a "transcendental" foundation for theoretical and practical knowledge. Such a concrete, transcendental elaboration of the analogy was not intended by William of Auvergne. He knows the notion of "transcendental" (*bonum … est transcendens genera*),[67] but does not have a systematic doctrine of these notions.

Our comparative inquiry does not allow any other conclusion than that Philip the Chancellor, in the introductory questions of his *Summa de bono*, really presents something new. His intention of going back into the "ground of thought" by reducing our understanding of questions to the *communissima* results in the earliest systematic formulation of a doctrine of the transcendentals. The doctrine is introduced as the philosophical answer to the dualism of Manichaeism. For the first time, Philip brings together four basic notions, "being", "one", "true", and "good", and investigates their mutual relations. But his account bears the marks of a first draft; it is rather terse and sometimes little explicit.

Viewed from a historical perspective, his doctrine has an atypical aspect, insofar as it is centered in a metaphysics of the good. The context of the doctrine generally is a conception of metaphysics, in which "being" is the proper subject of this science. Philip recognizes that *ens* is the first concept, but he does not say much about it. His interest

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[65] *Ibid.*, c. 11 (p. 272): "Et sicut quaedam sunt illuminantia per se intellectum nostrum sive per se lucentia intellectui nostro. quae primae impressiones et principia cognitionum nostrarum disciplinarum vocantur, sic sunt quaedam per se et primo moventia affectum nostrum (…) et debeant esse seminantia et principia affectionum nostrarum".

[66] Cf. G. Jüssen, "Neuansätze der ethischen Prinzipiendiskussion im Denken Wilhelms von Auvergne", in: J. Brachtendorf (ed.), *Prudentia und Contemplatio. Ethik und Metaphysik im Mittelalter. Festschrift für G. Wieland*, Paderborn 2002, pp. 35–46.

[67] William of Auvergne, *De bono et malo*, c. 11 (ed. O'Donnell, p. 270).

concerns "the good", a notion that is richer than (*habundat*) "being". Two elements of Philip's doctrine were especially directive for subsequent discussions of the transcendentals. The first is his view of the twofold relation between the *communissima*: there exists a real identity between them—they are convertible according to their supposits—, but they differ according to their concepts. The other element concerns the order of the most common notions, which is based on the notion of "indivision". It is somewhat paradoxical that Philip does not deal separately with *unum*, whereas the *ratio* of "one" determines his understanding of *bonum* and *verum*.

The *Summa de bono* was attentively read and frequently used, especially in the Franciscan milieu. The influence of Philip's account of the *communissima* is manifest in two works that were composed about twenty years after his *Summa*, namely, in the Franciscan *Summa theologica* attributed to Alexander of Hales, and in *De bono*, an early writing of the Dominican Albert the Great.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRANSCENDENTALS IN FRANCISCAN MASTERS

4.1 The expansion of the doctrine in the *Summa Halensis*

The doctrine of the transcendentals was considerably expanded by the first Franciscan masters of the University of Paris. One of the most extensive medieval accounts, which deserves more attention than it has received so far, is presented by the *Summa theologica*, attributed to Alexander of Hales, and therefore also called the *Summa Halensis* or *Summa fratris Alexandri*. Alexander was already regent master in Paris when he entered the Franciscan order in the academic year 1236–37. He became "the founder of the Franciscan School", who gave the school its characteristic body of teachings.[1] Alexander's name and authority are connected with the monumental *Summa*, but already in the Middle Ages doubts about his authorship were expressed by Roger Bacon (in his *Opus minus*, ca. 1267).[2] Modern studies have confirmed that Alexander may have been the supervisor of the project, but that several other Franciscans were involved in the editing of the *Summa*. The main editor of the first book is identified as John of Rupella (John of la Rochelle), who was the second *magister regens* of the Franciscans at the University of Paris and died in the same year as Alexander of Hales (1245).[3] This collective work of the Franciscans can thus rightly be called the *Summa minorum*.

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[1] Cf. K. B. Osborne, "Alexander of Hales: Precursor and Promoter of Franciscan Theology", in: id. (ed.), *The History of Franciscan Theology*, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1994, pp. 1–38.

[2] Roger Bacon, *Opus minus* (ed. J. S. Brewer, in: *Opera quaedam hactenus inedita*, Vol. I, London 1859 [reprinted in Nendelin 1965], pp. 325–326).

[3] The complex problem of the authorship of the *Summa theologica* is analyzed in vol. IV of the critical edtion (ed. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 4 vols., Quaracchi 1924–1948): *Prolegomena*.

The place of the transcendentals in the Summa

1. The place and function of the transcendentals in the *Summa Halensis* is determined by the role of metaphysics in this theological work. It was the first *Summa* that attempted to establish the scientific character of Christian theology. In the "Introductory treatise", the *Summa Halensis* shows that the "theology of sacred scripture" is a *scientia* distinct from First Philosophy or the "theology of the philosophers". The *Summa* does not yet express the distinction between the two sciences by means of the notion of their "proper subjects", but employs a different terminology. It distinguishes in a science between its matter "around which" (*circa quam*), that is, every thing with which the science is concerned, and its matter "of which" (*de qua*), that is, those things with which it is principally concerned. The matter "around which" of theology is "all things and signs" (sacraments), the corresponding matter of metaphysics is all things, since it considers "being (*ens*) according to every difference of being". The matter "of which" of theology is "the divine substance" as revealed by Christ in his work of redemption, the matter "of which" metaphysics treats is the same divine substance, but conceived as the first being on which all things are dependent.[4]

From this "onto-theological" conception of First Philosophy, it becomes understandable that in part I of the *Summa*, which examines God in his unity, metaphysics plays a central role. The third treatise deals with "the divine unity, truth and goodness", because, as it is stated there, these three notions are connected and equally related to one another (*sunt unius coordinationis*). The treatise is divided into three questions: "On the unity of the divine nature" (q. 1); "On the truth of the divine nature" (q. 2); and "On the goodness of the divine nature" (q. 3). In the introduction to the first question, the author observes that the clarification of the issues concerning the divine unity requires first of all an investigation of the conceptions of "one" and "unity". Q. 1 is therefore divided into three parts (*membra*): "On unity in general", "On the divine unity in particular", and "On the relation of the other unities to the divine unity". The part about "unity in general" discusses questions as to the concept of "one" and the relation of "one" to "being", "true", and "good". The *Summa* adopts the same procedure

[4] Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, I, n. 3 ad 3 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 7).

in the questions on the divine truth and the divine goodness. Thus the third treatise contains an extensive account (almost 90 pages in the modern critical edition) of the notions "one", "true", and "good".[5] In the *Summa Halensis*, the doctrine of the transcendentals is integrated in a theological synthesis, insofar as it provides a metaphysical ground for the explanation of the divine attributes.[6]

2. An essential presupposition of this integration is that "one", "true", and "good" are such common notions that they can be predicated not only of creatures, but also of God. This idea, however, seems questionable, as the *Summa* objects in the "Introductory treatise", since there is no similarity (*convenientia*) between creature and God.[7] The reply of the *Summa* consists in the notion of "analogy" that represents a form of commonness of its own. One has to distinguish between a *convenientia secundum univocationem*, which is a similarity in genus, species or number, and a *convenientia secundum analogiam*. The latter similarity is not formally explained, but elucidated through the example of "being" (*ens*) that is said of substance and accident *secundum prius et posterius*. "Being" is primarily said of substance, which is the principle of the accident and an *ens per se*; it is secondarily said of the accident, which is an *ens in alio*. The similarity between God and creature is likewise "according to analogy"; consequently, "good" is said of God and creature *secundum analogiam*: it is predicated of God essentially and of the creature by participation.[8]

The distinctive feature of "analogy" is the order of "priority and posteriority", the phrase that was also used by Philip the Chancellor (see ch. 3.3). The *Summa Halensis* does not mention his name, although it reproduces verbatim the text of Philip's question (q. 5) "On the commonness of goodness in good things", in which the Chancellor had described the commonness of goodness as a community "according

[5] *Ibid.*, tract. III (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, pp. 112–200). Cf. J. Fuchs, *Die Proprietäten des Seins bei Alexander von Hales: Beitrag zur Geschichte der scholastischen Seinslehre*, München 1930. E. Gössmann, *Metaphysik und Heilsgeschichte: eine theologische Untersuchung der Summa Halensis*, Munich 1964 (Mitteilungen des Grabmann-Institutes der Universität München. Sonderband, 1), pp. 338–349.

[6] Cf. Ph. Böhner, "The System of Metaphysics of Alexander of Hales", in: *Franciscan Studies* 26, New Series vol. 5 (1945), pp. 366–414, esp. pp. 392–398.

[7] Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, I, n. 21 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 31).

[8] *Ibid.* (p. 32).

to priority and posteriority".[9] Neither does the *Summa* relate the term *convenientia* to the Arab tradition, for instance to Algazel's *Logic*, which distinguishes *convenientia* as a type of names standing midway between *univoca* and *aequivoca* (see ch. 2.4.2). The only author to whom reference is made by the *Summa* in the context of analogy—a fact that is typical of the Franciscan School—is Augustine, who in his work *De trinitate* (V, c. 2) attributes "being in the truest sense" to God, since he is "immutable being".[10]

Like Philip the Chancellor, the *Summa Halensis* assumes that the "theological" analogy between God and creature is similar to the "transcendental" analogy, that is, the relation between substantial being and accidental being. But, unlike Philip, the *Summa* provides an explanation of this agreement: in both cases the order *secundum prius et posterius* applies, since this order is based on a relation of dependency in being. That which has *esse in alio*, the accident, has a dependency on that which has *esse non in alio*, the substance. Similarly that which has *esse ab alio*, creaturely being, has a dependency on that which has *esse non ab alio*, increated being. Hence, in both cases "being" is said "according to analogy".[11]

The expansion of the doctrine

A good impression of the expansion of the doctrine of the transcendentals in the *Summa Halensis* is given by the mere outline of the third treatise in Part I:

Tractatus III: *De divina unitate, veritate et bonitate*

Q. I: *De unitate divinae naturae*
Membrum I: *De unitate in genere*
c. 1 (n. 72): *Quid sit unum*
c. 2 (n. 73): *De comparatione unius ad ens et verum et bonum*
c. 3 (n. 74): *De differentiis unius et unitatis*
c. 4 (n. 75): *Quae sit oppositio unius ad multa*

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[9] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 107 (pp. 168–169): "De convenientia bonitatis in bonis". Note that Philip's term *communitas* is replaced by *convenientia*.

[10] *Ibid.*, n. 347 ad obiecta 1–2 (p. 514): "Dicendum ergo quod essentia non dicitur aequivoce; nec tamen dicitur univoce, sed analogice, sicut ostendit Augustinus, V *De Trinitate*".

[11] *Ibid.*, n. 347 (p. 514): It is a *contra* argument that is accepted ("Quod concedendum est").

Membrum II: *De unitate divina in specie*
6 quaestiones (nn. 76–81)
Membrum III: *De comparatione aliarum unitatum ad divinam*
5 quaestiones (nn. 82–86)

Q. II: *De veritate divinae naturae*
Membrum I: *De existentia et natura veritatis*
c. 1 (n. 87): *An necesse sit veritatem esse*
c. 2 (n. 88): *An intentio veritatis differat ab illa entitatis, unitatis et bonitatis*
c. 3 (n. 89): *Quid sit veritas*
c. 4 (n. 90): *In quibus sit veritas*
Membrum II: *De proprietatibus veritatis*
5 quaestiones (nn. 91–95)
Membrum III: *De falsitate veritati opposita*
6 quaestiones (nn. 96–101)

Q. III: *De bonitate divinae naturae*
Membrum I: *De bonitate in genere*
c. 1: *Quid sit bonum secundum rationem suae intentionis*
a. 1 (n. 102): *An idem sit bonum et ens*
a. 2 (n. 103): *An idem sit bonum et pulchrum*
a. 3 (n. 104): *An intentio boni dicatur secundum intentionem causae finalis*
c. 2 (n. 105): *An eadem sit bonitas in omnibus bonis*
c. 3 (n. 106): *Quae sint differentiae boni*
c. 4 (n. 107): *De convenientia bonitatis in bonis*
Membrum II: *De summo bono*
c. 1 (n. 108): *An notio et amor summi boni sint nobis a conditione indita*
c. 2 (n. 109): *An summum bonum dicat additionem ad bonum*
c. 3 (n. 110): *De fluxu aliorum bonorum a summo bono*
Membrum III: *De bono creato*
12 quaestiones (nn. 111–122)
Membrum IV: *De oppositione mali ad bonum*
8 quaestiones (nn. 123–130)

The evolution since the beginning of the doctrine of the transcendentals is remarkable. "The one", which was not treated separately by Philip the Chancellor, and "the true" are dealt with at length. The influence of the *Summa de bono* becomes especially apparent in the third question on goodness that discusses the issues raised in Philip's introductory questions.[12] However, the third question also contains,

[12] Q. 3, *Membrum* I ("On goodness in general") deals with the question "Are good and being the same?" (c. 1, a. 1 (n. 102); cf. Philip, q. 1); c. 4 (n. 107) ("On the commonness of goodness in good things") reproduces verbatim the text of Philip's q. 5.

new elements, such as a discussion of the relation between "the good" and "the beautiful" (n. 103)—a text that became the point of departure for the Scholastic reflections on *pulchrum* (see the excursus in 4.3).

The influence of Philip's account is also manifest in general teachings concerning the doctrine. So the *Summa Halensis* adopts the model of "indivision" in explaining the conceptual differences between the first notions. "Being" (*ens*) and "entity" (*entitas*) have an absolute meaning, but "one" adds indivision to *ens*; thus, unity is simply the indivision of being. "True" adds the indivision of *esse* to the indivision of *ens*; thus, truth is the indivision of being (*esse*) and that which is. "Good" adds the indivision according to well-being (*bene esse*) to the indivision of *ens* and *esse*; thus, the good is the indivision of act from its potency, for act is the completion or perfection of a thing's potency.[13] But, as we shall see, the *Summa* also elaborates the order among the transcendentals on a clearly different basis. Two features of the Franciscan reading of the doctrine deserve our attention: the "firstness" of the transcendental notions and their systematization.

The "firstness" of the transcendentals

The *Summa* does not use the terms *transcendentia* or *communissima*, but emphasizes the "firstness" of these notions: it speaks of the *primae intentiones* and the *primae impressiones*. These designations prove to have different connotations.

"Being", "one", "true" and "good" are the "first intentions".[14] The phrase *primae intentiones* was already used by Philip the Chancellor (see ch. 3.4) in order to express the conceptual priority of the *communissima*, insofar as a reduction (*resolutio*) to something more general is impossible. The same idea is advanced by the *Summa*: first notions cannot be defined or made known by something prior to them. Their *notificatio* can only occur by that which is logically posterior (*per posteriora*), as by a negation or an effect consequent upon them. A good

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Membrum II ("On the highest good") contains the question concerning "the flowing of other goods from the highest good" (c. 3 (n. 118); cf. Philip q. 7). *Membrum* III ("On created good") discusses the question from Boethius's *De hebdomadibus*: "Is created good good insofar as it has being and by virtue of its essence?" (c. 2 (nn. 116–117); cf. Philip q. 8). *Membrum* IV is devoted to the opposition of evil to good (cf. Philip q. 6).

[13] Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, I, tract. III, n. 88 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 140): "Does the concept of truth differ from those of entity, unity and goodness?"

[14] *Ibid.*, n. 72 (p. 113).

example is the concept of "one" that according to the Philosopher means "being undivided in itself and divided from others". The first part of this description, "being undivided", is the negation of the opposite concept, that of division or multitude; the second part, "divided from others", is the effect consequent upon the one, for unity brings about a distinction from other things.[15]

The *Summa* also asserts that "being", "one", "true" and "good" are "the first impressions" upon the intellect.[16] The term *primae impressiones* may be derived from Avicenna who teaches that "being" and "thing" "are impressed in the soul by a first impression" (see ch. 2.4.2). Most medieval authors avoid Avicenna's terminology of "first impressions" because of its epistemological implications. The Franciscan *Summa* does not have this hesitation; the reason may be that it relates the idea of a "first impression" not only to the Avicennian doctrine, in which the idea concerns the most common notions, but also to another tradition.

In one place the *Summa Halensis* refers to "the Philosopher" who states "that *ens* is the *prima impressio* upon the intellect"—"the Philosopher" must in this case be identified as Avicenna. The context of this reference is a discussion of the knowledge of the first causal principle. On the basis of the Arab philosopher's teaching of a "first impression" an objection argues that the order which holds for being *in communitate* also holds for the first being in causality. "Therefore the first being (*primum ens*) in the order of causality is the *prima impressio*" and thus is through itself known by the intellect.[17] The argument is accepted in the *corpus articuli* so that the "first impression" now concerns the innate knowledge of God as the *first* being in line with a tradition that goes back to Augustine, who, in the eighth book of *De trinitate* (c. 3), maintains that "the notion of the good itself is impressed upon us".

The tendency to unite in the doctrine of the "first impressions" the idea of an innate knowledge of the *first being* and Avicenna's claim that being is what is *first known* is manifest in a discussion of the divine names in the *Summa*. The designation (*nominatio*) of the divine

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[15] *Ibid.*

[16] Cf. *ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*, II, n. 2, In contrarium, 3 (Vol. II, p. 3): "Praeterea, dicit Philosophus quod ens est prima impressio intelligentiae; sed quo ordine se habet ens in communitate, eo ordine se habet primum ens in causalitate; ergo et primum ens in ordine causalitatis est prima impressio; se ipso ergo cognoscitur secundum substantiam ab intelligentia".

occurs in two ways: through the effects and through the impression of notions that are implanted (*inditae*) in the intellect. According to the first way, the divine is called "creator"; according to the second way, "being", "true" and "good" are divine names, for these notions of "the first being", "the first true" and "the first good" are "impressed" in us. The *Summa* goes on to say that the notion of "being" (*ens*) is the first, because *ens* is the *primum intelligibile*. Hence through this notion impressed from the divine being one designates God as "being".[18]

The "first impressions" upon the intellect appear to have a double function in the *Summa Halensis*: they are the most common notions and notions proper to God. The precise relation between the two functions is not elaborated by the *Summa*.[19] But the view that what is first known by the human intellect is the first, divine being became, as we shall see in Bonaventure, a characteristic feature of Franciscan thought.

The systematic order

1. The *Summa Halensis* discusses the order among the primary notions three times, namely, in the questions on unity (n. 72), on truth (n. 83), and on goodness (n. 102). The most extensive text is the first, explaining the relation of "one" to "being", "true" and "good". It starts with a number of objections that suggest the identity of these concepts. Typical of the Franciscan bias of this account are the authorities to which reference is made in the arguments: Dionysius the Areopagite, Augustine, Boethius, not: Aristotle and Avicenna. The argument for

[18] *Ibid.*, I, n. 345 (Vol. I, p. 513): "Et dicendum quod nominatio divini esse est duobus modis: per effectus et per impressiones notionum quae sunt inditae intellectui. Per effectus nominatur Creator (…). Per impressiones vero notionum quae sunt inditae intellectui, nominatur ens, verum et bonum: hae enim notiones entis primi et veri primi et boni primi nobis impressae sunt (…). Notio autem entis prima est, quia ens est primum intelligibile: unde hac notione sibi impressa de divino esse (…) nominat Deum ens et essentiam". Cf. *ibid.*, I, n. 108 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 169): "Amor ergo et notio summi boni nobis impressus est secundum habitum et sensum naturae". I cannot subscribe to the interpretation of C. Bérubé, *De la philosophie à la sagesse chez Saint Bonaventure et Roger Bacon*, Rome 1976 (Bibliotheca Seraphico-Capuccina, 26), p. 216, who holds that Avicenna's theory is used in the *Summa* "against the priority of the innate knowledge of the first principle".

[19] Cf. the observations in J. Fuchs, *Die Proprietäten des Seins*, pp. 19–28. E. Schlenker, *Die Lehre von den göttlichen Namen in der Summe Alexanders von Hales. Ihre Prinzipien und Ihre Methode*, Freiburg 1938 (Freiburger Theologische Studien, 46), pp. 100–114.

the identity of "one" and "being" is based on their convertibilility, of which the locus classicus is Aristotle's *Metaphysics*; but the *Summa* appeals to Dionysius the Areopagite. It seems that "one" and "true" are identical, because both the concept of "one" and that of "true" express what distinguishes one thing from another, as Augustine in *De vera religione* makes clear. Likewise the "one" and the "good" seem to be identical, as statements of Boethius in his *Consolation of Philosophy* suggest.[20]

The reply in the *Summa* departs from the thesis that "being" is the first intelligible, and that "one", "true" and "good" are "the first determinations" (*primae determinationes*) of being.[21] The author realizes that the phrase "determination" can give rise to misunderstandings, because the determination of something usually implies a restriction or limitation of its denotation. In replying to the objection that the determination of being by "one" means a restriction, he distinguishes two modes of restriction: the first relates to the intelligible content, the *ratio intelligendi*; the second relates to the scope of the singular beings or supposits (*supposita*), that follows the act of existing (*actus existendi*). In the first way the determination added by "one" restricts "being", for by the term "one", "being" is understood under a determinate concept, that of indivision. But in the second way "being" is not restricted, for there does not exist a being that does not participate in unity.[22]

From this reply it appears that the relation between "being" and its first determinations is twofold: there exists a real identity and a conceptual difference. "Being", "one", "true" and "good" "coincide in reality" (*secundum rem*), but they differ in concept (*secundum intentionem*).[23]

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[20] Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, I, n. 73 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, pp. 113–114).

[21] *Ibid.* (p. 114). Cf. *ibid.*, n. 72 (p. 113): "Cum sit 'ens' primum intelligibile, eius intentio apud intellectum est nota; primae ergo determinationes entis sunt primae impressiones apud intellectum: eae sunt unum, verum, bonum".

[22] *Ibid.*, n. 73 (p. 115): "Ad illud quod primo obicitur quod 'illa determinatio coarctabit ens': dicendum quod est coarctatio dupliciter: quantum ad rationem intelligendi et quantum ad ambitum suppositorum, qui consequitur actum existendi. Dicendum ergo quod addita determinatio unitatis ad ens coarctat ipsum quantum ad rationem intelligendi; cum enim dico 'unum', non intelligitur ens sub quacumque ratione, sed sub determinata tali, quae est ratio indivisionis. Quantum vero ad ambitum suppositorum non coarctat, quia non existit aliquod ens quod non participet unitatem, sicut dicit Dionysius".

[23] *Ibid.*, n. 88 (p. 140). Cf. *ibid.*, n. 102 (pp. 160–161).

The *Summa Halensis* thus adopts Philip the Chancellor's general view of the relations among the most common notions.[24] But, in contrast to Philip, it does not regard "the one", understood as "the negation of division", as the exclusive model for the conceptual determination of the transcendentals. In the discussion of the relation of "the one" to the other primary notions, the *Summa* presents three orders of the first determinations of "being", two of which are completely based on a relational viewpoint.

2. "One", "true" and "good", the *Summa* states, determine "being" according to three modes, which can be called ontological, theological and anthropological. (i) The first determination considers the being of things "in its own genus" (*in proprio genere*); (ii) the second "according to their relation to the divine cause". This determination corresponds to Philip the Chancellor's theological foundation of the *communissima*, which reduces the three conditions concomitant with being to the threefold divine causality. (iii) The third determination considers the being of things "according to their relation to the soul", "which is the image of the divine essence".[25] The anthropological determination is an original moment in this account. The *Summa* next works out these modes.

(i) From the viewpoint of being (*esse*) *in its proper genus*, the determination of that which is (*ens*) is threefold. For *ens* is considered either absolutely or relationally, and its consideration in relation to something else is either according to a difference or according to a conformity. If being is considered "absolutely", that is, as divided from others and undivided in itself, it is determined by *unum*. If it is considered in relation to something else according to a difference, it is determined by *verum*, for "true" is that by which a thing can be discerned (*discerni*). If being is considered in relation to something

[24] J. Fuchs, *Die Proprietäten des Seins*, pp. 133–144 wrongly interprets the doctrine of the transcendentals in the *Summa Halensis* from a Scotistic model. Duns Scotus does not see the distinction between "being" and the other transcendentals as a "rational" one, but as a "formal" distinction to the effect that the properties of being are formally not a being.

[25] Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, I, n. 73 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 114): "Primae autem entis determinationes sunt 'unum' et 'verum' et 'bonum': determinant enim ens secundum quod consideratur esse rerum in proprio genere, et etiam secundum relationem esse earum ad divinam causam, et secundum relationem rerum ad animam, quae est imago divinae essentiae".

else according to conformity or order, it is determined by *bonum*, for "good" is that in virtue of which a thing is ordered.[26]

(ii) From the viewpoint of *the relation to the divine cause*, being is likewise determined in three manners, for the divine causality is in three genera of cause, the efficient, the formal or exemplary, and the final. The *Summa* adds a remark that gives the divine causality a trinitarian meaning. Although these kinds of causality are common to the Trinity, they are "appropriated", that is, treated as proper to one of the three divine Persons—the efficient causality is appropriated to the Father, the exemplary causality to the Son, the final causality to the Holy Spirit.[27]

Interesting in the exposition of the divine causality is the introduction of the term "impression", which was, as we have seen, the *Summa*'s designation for the primary notions. As it flows from the divine cause, created being acquires a threefold "impression", by which it is disposed to stand in a relation of conformity to the cause. *Unitas* is the disposition by which it stands in a relation of conformity with the efficient cause: Just as the efficient cause is one and undivided, so every creature has undivided being. *Veritas* is the disposition by which being stands in conformity with the exemplary cause: Just as the exemplary cause is the first art (*ars prima*) of truth, so every creature is an imitation of the divine art and therefore possesses truth. *Bonum* is that in virtue of which being is in conformity with the final cause: Just as the final cause is the supreme good, so every creature has an inclination to the highest good.[28]

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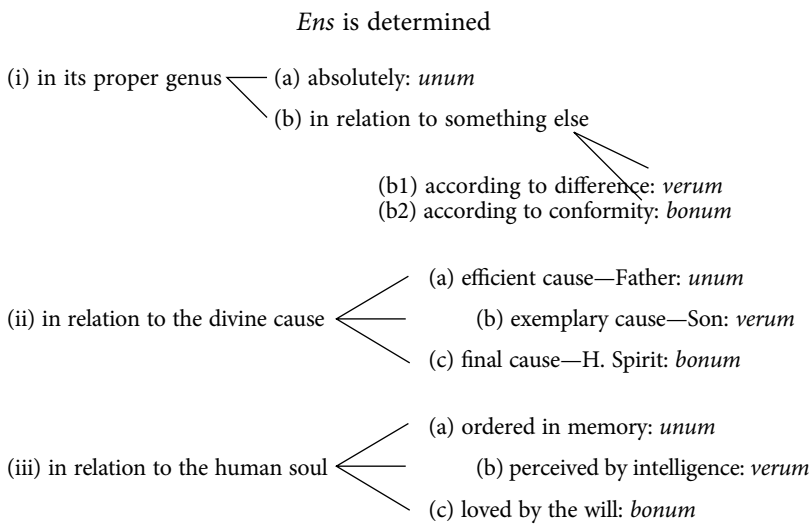
[26] *Ibid.* (pp. 114–115): "Secundum autem quod esse rerum consideratur in proprio genere, triplicatur entis determinatio. Aut enim consideratur absolutum aut comparatum; et comparatum: aut secundum differentiam aut secundum convenientiam. Secundum quod ens aliquod consideratur absolutum, ut divisum ab aliis et in se indivisum, determinatur per 'unum'. Secundum vero quod consideratur aliquod ens comparatum ad aliud secundum distinctionem, determinatur per 'verum': 'verum' enim est quo res habet discerni. Secundum vero quod consideratur comparatum ad aliud secundum convenientiam sive ordinem, determinatur per 'bonum: 'bonum' enim est ex quo res habet ordinari".

[27] *Ibid.* (p. 115): "Item, secundum quod esse rerum comparatur in relatione ad causam divinam, simili modo triplicatur determinatio. Causa enim divina est causa in triplici genere causae: efficiens, formalis ut exemplar, finalis. Quae quidem causalitas, cum sit communis toti Trinitati, appropriatur ut causa efficiens Patri, exemplaris Filio, finalis Spiritui Sancto".

[28] *Ibid.*: "Secundum hoc, esse in creatura, quod fluit a causa, triplicem sortitur impressionem, ut in conformatione ad causam. Impressio ergo dispositionis in esse creaturae, secundum quam fit in conformitate ad efficientem causam, est unitas: ut

(iii) From the viewpoint of *the relation to the soul*, there is again a threefold determination of being, for things are related to the soul in three ways that correspond with the faculties of memory (*memoria*), intelligence (*intelligentia*) and will (*voluntas*). From the efficient cause there is unity in every being, in virtue of which it is ordered and preserved in memory. From the exemplary cause there is truth in every being, in virtue of which it is perceived by the intelligence. From the final cause there is goodness in every being, in virtue of which it is loved by the will.[29]

Schematically represented, Alexander's systematization of the transcendentals runs as follows:



sicut efficiens causa est una, indivisa, multiplicata in qualibet creatura, sic fit, ut sibi possibile est, esse indivisum. Item, impressio dispositionis, secundum quam fit in conformitate ad causam formalem exemplarem, est veritas: ut sicut causa exemplaris est ars prima veritatis, sic creatura, secundum quod sibi possibile est, fit in imitatione artis: et hoc est habere veritatem. Praeterea, impressio secundum quam fit in conformitate ad causam finalem est bonum: ut sicut causa finalis est summa bonitas, sic cuilibet creaturae sit inclinatio et conformitas ad summam bonitatem: et haec est creaturae bonitas".

[29] *Ibid.*: "Item, per comparationem ad animam triplicatur eadem determinatio. Nam esse rerum tripliciter comparatur ad animam: videlicet ut res ordinentur in memoria, percipiantur intelligentia, diligantur voluntate. Est igitur in ente quolibet a causa efficiente unitas, per quam ordinetur in memoria et servetur (…). Item, a causa exemplari est veritas in quolibet ente, per quam percipiatur ab intelligentia. Item, a causa finali est bonitas, per quam diligatur vel approbetur voluntate".

The account of the first determinations of being in the *Summa Halensis* presents another feature of the Franciscan appropriation of the doctrine of the transcendentals, namely the dominance of what might be called the "trinitarian" motive. The trinitarian foundation of the *primae determinationes* in the threefold divine causality is constitutive for the two other orders, the ontological and anthropological order. The *Summa* is not interested in a consideration of being in itself, but sees the ontological determinations of being as "the vestiges" of the Trinity in the created world.[30] The trinitarian motive comes to the fore even more clearly in the anthropological order. Man is more than a vestige, he is an "image" of the Trinity because of his faculties of *memoria–intelligentia–voluntas*, a triad derived from Augustine's *De trinitate* (book X).

4.2 Bonaventure: Transcendentals and the ascent of the mind to God

A prominent representative of the "Franciscan School" is Bonaventure (1217–1274), who studied at Paris under Alexander of Hales. He lectured on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (1250–52), a text that his master Alexander had introduced as an official textbook for the study of theology—Bonaventure's *Sentences* Commentary is an impressive example of this new genre. He was *magister regens* at the University of Paris from 1254 until his election as Minister of the Franciscan Order in February 1257, but kept in touch with the academic world after his departure.[31] The distinctive form of Bonaventure's theory of the transcendentals is closely connected with his view of the human consideration of reality as an ascent of the mind to God.[32] At the beginning of his most influential work *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, written

[30] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 88 (p. 140): "Istae ergo intentiones non separantur ab essentia rei velut vestigia primae causae, quae est Trinitas unius essentiae".

[31] For the chronology of Bonaventure's life and works, cf. J. G. Bougerol, *Introduction à Saint Bonaventure*, Paris 1988 (A la recherche de la vérité, 19), pp. 4–11. All references to Bonaventure's works follow this critical edition: *S. Bonaventurae Opera omnia* (ed. Collegium S. Bonaventurae), Vol. I–X, Quaracchi 1882–1902.

[32] For Bonaventure's doctrine of the transcendentals, cf. J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer, "Die Philosophie Bonaventuras und die Transzendentalienlehre", in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 64 (1997), pp. 32–66. G. Cresta, *Die Transzendentalien des Seins als onto-theologische Grundsätze des Seienden. Ein Beitrag zu Metaphysik und Anthropologie Bonaventuras*, Frankfurt am Main 2004.

in 1259—one of the great spiritual books from the Middle Ages—, he states that "the universe of things is a ladder (*scala*) by which we may ascend to God". This progression occurs in three steps: first, we must consider the things outside us as "vestiges" (*vestigia*) of God; next, we must enter into our mind, which is the image (*imago*) of God; and finally, looking to the first principle, we must go beyond to what is above us.[33] Whereas the three orders of the first determinations of "being", presented in the *Summa Halensis*—ontological, theological and anthropological—, have a schematic character and remain rather abstract, their fundamental functions become more concrete in Bonaventure's works.

"The noblest and most general conditions of being"

The term *transcendens* is not yet current in Bonaventure's work. In only one place he uses this expression as designation for "being" and "one". He does not give an explanation of the term, but takes its meaning for granted: what is *transcendens* is not, because of its generalness, restricted to one determinate category.[34] The phrase Bonaventure usually employs is *conditiones generales*.

In his work *Breviloquium* (datable before 1257), he deals with "the noblest and most general conditions of being", namely *unum, verum* and *bonum*. It is striking that Bonaventure characterizes the most general conditions of being as "the noblest". These notions do not contract being "according to their supposits" (*secundum supposita*), but are convertible with being and one another.[35] They are not, however, synonyms. The second mark of the relation of the other transcendentals to "being" consists in that "one", "true", and "good" conceptually add something to "being"; they contract "being" *secundum rationem*.[36]

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[33] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, I, 2 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, p. 297a).

[34] Bonaventure, *In IV Sententiarum*, d. 49, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1 f. 2 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, p. 1000a): "Item, omne creatum, quod non est transcendens, ut ens et unum, est alicuius generis determinati; sed beatitudo est bonum creatum, ut probatum est, et non est transcendens, eo quod in paucissimis reperitur: ergo etc.".

[35] Bonaventure confirms the convertibility in a number of statements, in which he also indicates the respective authorities: *In I Sententiarum*, d. 24, a. 1, qu. 2 arg. 1 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 423a): "Ens et unum convertuntur, sicut vult Philosophus et Boethius". *In II Sententiarum*, d. 37, a. 2, qu. 3 f. 3 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. II, p. 874a): "Verum et ens convertuntur". *In I Sententiarum*, d. 1, a. 1, qu. 2 f. 2 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 32a): "Ens et bonum convertuntur, sicut vult Dionysius".

[36] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, I, c. 6 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, p. 215a): "(…) conditiones entis nobilissimae et generalissimae (…). Hae autem sunt *unum, verum, bonum*, quae non contrahunt ens secundum *supposita*, sed secundum *rationem*".

Bonaventure next explains the conceptual differences between the most general notions. "One" signifies "being" as "numerable" (*connumerabile*), and this because of its indivision in itself. "True" signifies "being" as "knowable" (*cognoscibile*), and this because of its indivision from its own specific form. "Good" signifies "being" as "communicable" (*communicabile*), and this because of its indivision from its own operation. The threefold indivision determines the conceptual order of the general conditions of "being" in the sense that "the true" presupposes "the one", and "the good" presupposes "one" und "true".[37] Bonaventure formulates the differences between the transcendentals in terms of "indivision", a model that he also uses in other texts.[38] The key position of *indivisio* testifies to the strong influence of the first account of the doctrine of the transcendentals by Philip the Chancellor, in which the notion of "indivision" is central.

The context of Bonaventure's exposition of the transcendentals in the *Breviloquium* is typical of his intention. He sets forth his doctrine in explanation of the appropriation of the attributes "unity", "truth", and "goodness" to the divine Persons: "unity" is appropriated to the Father, "truth" to the Son and "goodness" to the Spirit. They are attributed to the first principle in the highest degree, because they are perfect and general; they are appropriated to the three Persons, because they possess an order.[39] Bonaventure's interest shows the continuity of the Franciscan

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[37] *Ibid.*: "Nam unum nominat ens ut connumerabile et hoc habet per indivisionem sui in se; verum secundum quod cognoscibile et hoc habet per indivisionem sui a propria specie; bonum secundum quod communicabile et hoc habet per indivisionem sui a propria operatione. Et quia haec triplex indivisio se habet secundum ordinem quantum ad rationem intelligendi, ita quod verum praesupponit unum, et bonum praesupponit unum et verum".

[38] Cf. Bonaventure, *Sermo II: De regno Dei* 43 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, p. 551b), in which Bonaventure argues against the "Manichees": "Cum enim unitas sit indivisio entis, veritas indivisio entis et esse, bonitas addit adhuc super hoc, quia est inivisio entis et esse et agere (…)". Cf. also *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti*, IV, 7 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, pp. 474b–475a), where he explains his doctrine of the "threefold truth" (*triplex veritas*) in terms of "indivision": "(…) ipse describit eam tripliciter, scilicet in quantum est veritas rerum, veritas sermonum et veritas morum, secundum quod est indivisio entis ab esse, et indivisio entis ad esse et entis a fine. Veritas rerum est indivisio entis ab esse; veritas sermonum est indivisio entis ad esse; veritas morum est indivisio entis a fine".

[39] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, I, c. 6 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, pp. 214b–215a): "De pluralitate appropriatorum hoc docet sacra Scriptura esse tenendum, quod licet omnia essentialia omnibus personis aequaliter et indifferenter conveniant; tamen Patri dicitur appropriari unitas, Filio veritas, Spiritui sancto bonitas. (…) haec attribuuntur primo principio in summo, quia perfecta et generalia; et appropriantur tribus personis, quia ordinata".

tradition, for the "trinitarian" motive was the salient feature of the doctrine of the transcendentals in the *Summa Halensis*.

First step in the ascent: Transcendentals as "vestiges" of God

One of what Romano Guardini has called the "system-constituting elements" of Bonaventure's thought is his understanding of metaphysics.[40] He explains his conception in the first collation of his last work (1273), the *Collationes in Hexaemeron*. His approach is quite different from the contemporary debates among the commentators, because Bonaventure does not raise "the basic question" as to the "subject" of metaphysics. His aim is to show that Christ is the "middle" (*medium*) of all sciences, of which metaphysics is the first.[41]

Bonaventure's point of departure is the observation that *esse* is twofold: either being *ex se, secundum se* and *propter se* or being *ex alio, secundum aliud* and *propter aliud*. The metaphysician rises from the consideration of the latter, created being, to that of the former, uncreated being that features the aspect of origin, exemplary middle and end. When the metaphysician considers being under the aspect of the principle that is the origin of all things, he agrees with the physician who studies the origin of things. When the metaphysician considers being under the aspect of the final end, he agrees with the moral philosopher or ethicist. But when he considers being under the aspect of exemplarity, he agrees with nobody and is the *verus metaphysicus*.[42] Exemplarism is according to Bonaventure the center of metaphysics, a view that implies a criticism of Aristotle, because the Philosopher rejected the doctrine of the Ideas. He concludes his account by listing the central topics of "our entire metaphysics" (*tota nostra metaphysica*): "emanation, exemplarity, consummation, that is being illuminated by spiritual radiation and reduced (*reduci*) to the highest".[43] Bonaventure holds an "exemplaristic-reductive" form of First Philosophy.

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[40] Cf. R. Guardini, *Systembildende Elemente in der Theologie Bonaventuras. Die Lehre vom Lumen mentis, von der Gradatio entium und der Influentia sensus et motus* (ed. W. Dettloff), Leiden 1964 (Studia et Documenta Franciscana, 3).

[41] Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, I, n. 11 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, p. 331a).

[42] *Ibid.*, n. 13 (p. 331b).

[43] *Ibid.*, n. 17 (p. 332b): "Hoc est medium metaphysicum reducens, et haec est tota nostra metaphysica: de emanatione, de exemplaritate, de consummatione, scilicet illuminari per radios spirituales et reduci ad summum. Et sic eris verus metaphysicus".

In the "reduction" of things to their exemplar or in the ascent of the mind to God we must first consider the things outside us as "vestiges" of God. But can God be known through creatures? It seems doubtful, since the Creator and the creature have nothing in common (*nihil commune*). In his reply to this objection, Bonaventure recognizes that there is not something common by univocation, but there is a commonness by analogy. Analogy is of two kinds: the relation of two things to two things (*duorum ad duo*), that is, an equality of two proportions, or the relation of one thing to another (*unius ad unum*)—Bonaventure illustrates the latter analogy with the central notion of his metaphysics: "as the relation of the *exemplar* to the *exemplatum*".[44]

Exemplarism is the metaphysical basis of the doctrine that a vestige of God is found in every creature. Bonaventure elaborates this traditional teaching in a new way by relating it to the doctrine of the transcendentals. To-be-a-vestige is not accidental to things, but essential.[45] For this reason the vestige consists in those properties without which a thing can neither be nor be thought. It is therefore found in the *conditiones maxime universales et intelligibiles*, namely unity, truth and goodness. They are "vestiges" of God, since they represent God as cause: *unum* refers to the efficient cause, *verum* to the exemplary cause and *bonum* to the final cause.[46] These transcendental references to the threefold divine causality are likewise a vestige of the trinitarian appropriations.[47] In the first step of Bonaventure's "reduction" or ascent to

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[44] Bonaventure, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2 ad 3 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 72b): "Ad illud quod obiicitur de defectu communitatis, dicendum, quod non est commune per univocationem, tamen est commune per analogiam, quae dicit habitudinem duorum ad duo, ut in nauta et doctore, vel unius ad unum, ut exemplaris ad exemplatum".

[45] Cf. Bonaventure's summary of his view in *In II Sententiarum*, d. 16, a. 1, q. 2 f. 4 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. II, p. 397a): "Item, esse imaginem Dei non est homini accidens, sed potius substantiale, sicut esse vestigium nulli accidit creaturae".

[46] Bonaventure, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2 ad 4 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 73ab): "Nam unitas, veritas, bonitas, in quibus consistit vestigium, sunt conditiones maxime universales et intelligibiles. (…) Nam creaturae dicuntur (…) vestigium quantum ad proprietatem, quae respicit Deum sub ratione triplicis causae: efficientis, formalis et finalis, sicut sunt unum, verum et bonum".—*In I Sententiarum*, d. 3, p. 2, a. 1, q. 3 ad 1.2 (I, p. 86b): "Dicitur essentiale sine quo res non potest esse nec potest intelligi esse, ut sunt illa in quibus attenditur ratio vestigii, ut unitas, veritas, bonitas".

[47] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 4 (p. 76b): "Philosophi nunquam per rationem cognoverunt personarum trinitatem nec etiam pluralitatem, nisi haberent aliquem habitum fidei. (…) Est alia trinitas appropriatorum, scilicet unitatis, veritatis et bonitatis, et hanc cognoverunt, quia habet simile".

God, the general conditions of "being" thus function as "vestiges" and so concretize the second, "theological", order of the transcendentals in the *Summa Halensis*.

Second step: The "complete resolution" of knowledge

1. The philosophical nature of Bonaventure's thought has been controversially assessed. Etienne Gilson stamped his thought as "the most medieval" of all medieval philosophies on account of its refusal to put itself on the common basis of pure reason.[48] Ironically, Bonaventure more probingly than any other medieval thinker searched for a truth that is philosophically indubitable. In one of his earliest university works (from around 1254), the disputed questions "On the Mystery of the Trinity" (*De mysterio trinitatis*), he discusses two preliminary matters (*praeambula*). The first concerns the foundation of all knowledge that claims certainty (*fundamentum omnis cognitionis certitudinalis*) and is connected with the question: "Is God's existence an indubitable truth?" The other preliminary question concerns the foundation of all knowledge of faith: "Is God's Trinity a *verum credibile*?"[49] The search for the foundation of all certain knowledge is another "system-constituting element" in Bonaventure's works.

The problem of certain knowledge belongs to the second level in the ascent of the mind to God, namely the contemplation of created reality as an "image" (*imago*) of God.[50] In contrast to the *vestigium*, the *imago* is only found in rational creatures; it refers to God not only insofar as he is cause, but also as *obiectum*. To-be-an-image expresses the special position of human beings in the world, who alone are *capax Dei* through knowledge and love. The rational creature is an image of God through its three faculties of *memoria, intelligentia* and *voluntas*.[51]

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[48] E. Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure* (transl. by I. Trethowan / F. J. Sheed), New York 1965, p. 437. Cf. A. Speer, "Bonaventure and the Question of a Medieval Philosophy", in: *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 6 (1997), pp. 25–46.

[49] Bonaventure, *Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio Trinitatis*, prol. (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, p. 45ab): "Volentes circa mysterium Trinitatis aliquid indagare, divina praevia gratia, duo praemittimus tanquam praeambula: quorum primum est fundamentum omnis cognitionis certitudinalis; secundum est fundamentum omnis cognitionis fidelis. Primum est, utrum Deum esse sit verum indubitabile. Secundum est, utrum Deum esse trinum sit verum credibile".

[50] Cf. Bonaventure, *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi*, q. 4 corp. (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, p. 24a): "Quoniam igitur certitudinalis cognitio competit spiritui rationali, in quantum est imago Dei".

[51] Bonaventure, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2 ad 4 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 73b): "Nam creaturae dicuntur (…) imago quantum ad conditiones, quae respiciunt

Bonaventure deals with this triad, which corresponds with the third order of the general determinations of "being" in the *Summa Halensis*, in the third chapter of the *Itinerarium*: "On the consideration of God through his image imprinted on our natural powers".

A typical feature of Bonaventure's theory of the transcendentals comes to the fore in his exposition on the *intelligentia*. He analyzes the basic element in the activity of the intellective faculty, "the perception of terms" (*termini*). The intellect grasps what is signified by a term when it understands by a definition what a thing is. A definition is formed by reducing the thing to be defined (for instance "What is man?") to a higher, that is, a more general concept (for instance "animal"). This concept in turn must be reduced to a still higher concept, until one attains that which is the highest and most general (*generalissima*). When this is ignored, what is lower (*inferiora*) cannot be definitively understood. "Consequently, unless one knows what is being (*ens*) *per se*, one cannot completely (*plene*) know the definition of any particular substance. But being *per se* cannot be known unless it is known together with its 'conditions', which are 'one', 'true', and 'good'".[52] There is an ambiguity in Bonaventure's conclusion, insofar as the end of the resolution refers to the highest genus or category of "substance", that is, *ens per se*, whereas its "conditions" are transcendental determinations, which are the properties of being in general.

The crucial point in Bonaventure's analysis is that the *resolutio* of human knowledge is not yet complete with the reduction carried out so far. "Being", he observes, can be conceived as imperfect and perfect, as being in potency or being in act, as changeable and unchangeable, as dependent or as absolute, as composite and simple, etc.—Bonaventure lists a series of twelve disjunctions. He argues that imperfections and privations are only known by means of positive determinations: for how could the intellect know that a being is defective and incomplete, if it had no knowledge of being that is free from all defect? Therefore

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Deum non tantum in ratione causae, sed et obiecti, quae sunt memoria, intelligentia et voluntas".—*Ibid.*: "Sed quoniam sola rationalis creatura comparatur ad Deum ut obiectum, quia sola est capax Dei per cognitionem et amorem: ideo sola est imago".

[52] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, III, 3 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, p. 304a): "Capit autem intellectus terminorum significata, cum comprehendit, quid est unumquodque per definitionem. Sed definitio habet fieri per superiora, et illa per superiora definiri habent, usquequo veniatur ad suprema et generalissima, quibus ignoratis non possunt intelligi definitive inferiora. Nisi igitur cognoscatur, quid est ens per se, non potest plene sciri definitio alicuius specialis substantiae. Nec ens per se cognosci potest, nisi cognoscatur cum suis conditionibus, quae sunt: unum, verum, bonum".

our intellect does not come to a complete "analysis" or resolution (*plene resolvens*) of the understanding of any created being, unless it is aided by the understanding of the most pure, most actual, most complete and absolute being (*ens*) which is being *simpliciter*. In like manner, Bonaventure adds, we may reason about the "other conditions" mentioned before, that is, the transcendental properties "one", "true" and "good".[53]

2. The complete resolution of concepts is based on a metaphysical reduction of imperfect being to the exemplar of all things. The structure of the *resolutio* in the *Itinerarium* is similar to one of Bonaventure's "ways" (*viae*) in *De mysterio trinitatis*, which prove that God's existence is an indubitable truth. The second way—"any truth proclaimed by every creature is an indubitable truth"—proceeds from ten "conditions" (*conditiones*) of being and "self-evident propositions" (*suppositions per se notae*). These conditions are ten pairs of disjunctions:

ens posterius and *ens prius*,
ens ab alio and *ens non ab alio*,
ens possibile and *ens necessarium,*
ens respectivum and *ens absolutum,*
ens diminutum (or *secundum quid*) and *ens simpliciter,*
ens propter aliud and *ens propter se ipsum,*
ens per participationem and *ens per essentiam,*
ens in potentia and *ens in actu*,
ens compositum and *ens simplex*,
ens mutabile and *ens immutabile.*[54]

[53] *Ibid.*: "Ens autem, cum possit cogitari ut diminutum et ut completum, ut imperfectum et ut perfectum, ut ens in potentia et ut ens in actu, ut ens secundum quid et ut ens simpliciter, ut ens in parte et ut ens totaliter, ut ens transiens et ut ens manens, ut ens per aliud et ut ens per se, ut ens permixtum non-enti et ut ens purum, ut ens dependens et ut ens absolutum, ut ens posterius et ut ens prius, ut ens mutabile et ut ens immutabile, ut ens simplex et ut ens compositum: cum 'privationes et defectus nullatenus possint cognosci nisi per positiones' (Averroes, In III De anima), non venit intellectus noster ut plene resolvens intellectum alicuius entium creatorum, nisi iuvetur ab intellectu entis purissimi, actualissimi, completissimi et absoluti, quod est ens simpliciter (…). Quomodo autem sciret intellectus, hoc esse ens defectivum et incompletum, si nullam haberet cognitionem entis absque omni defectu? Et sic de aliis conditionibus praelibatis".

[54] Bonaventure, *De mysterio Trinitatis*, q. 1, a. 1 f. 11–20 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, pp. 46b–47b).

In all these cases, Bonaventure claims that the existence of the imperfect member of the pair implies the existence of the perfect member. For instance, if there is being in potency, there is being in act, because a potency can be reduced to act only by a being in act, and there would be no potency, unless it were capable of being reduced to act. If that being which is pure act and has no potency is none other than God, it is necessary that everything other than the first being implies that God is. Bonaventure draws the general conclusion that "all the differences of being (*entis differentiae*) proclaim the existence of God.[55]

Both Bonaventure's resolution of knowledge and his way of establishing God's existence are based on the disjunctive properties of being. An explicit doctrine of the disjunctive transcendentals was formulated by Duns Scotus for the first time (see ch. 9.2). His dependency on Bonaventure in this respect cannot be excluded, for there are striking similarities between Scotus's *passiones disjunctae* and Bonaventure's *differentiae entis*. In order to prove God's existence Scotus starts from the same "presupposition" as his Franciscan predecessor, namely that one can conclude the existence of the nobler member of the disjunction from the existence of the less noble member.[56] There are, however, also crucial differences. Bonaventure does not conceive the disjunctive properties of being as transcendental. The two Franciscan masters likewise differ in their views of the commonness of the concept of being, which is divided into the disjunctive properties. Duns Scotus maintains that this concept is univocally common to God and creature. The idea of "common being" is absent in Bonaventure's resolution in the *Itinerarium*. As he states in his account of metaphysics, "being" is twofold, it is *ex se* or *ex alio*.

The method of "analysis" or "resolution" is an answer to the problem of the certainty of knowledge. The originality of Bonaventure's position consists in the radicalization of this "analysis". Thomas Aquinas, in his systematic account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, also follows the method of *resolutio* (see ch. 6.1): that which the intellect first conceives and into which it resolves (*resolvit*) all its conceptions is "being" (*ens*). But for Bonaventure Thomas's *resolutio* stops too early: the Franciscan master distinguishes two successive stages in the

[55] *Ibid.*, f. 18 (p. 47a).

[56] R. Lay, "*Passiones entis disiunctae*. Ein Beitrag zur Problemgeschichte der Transzendentalienlehre", in: *Theologie und Philosophie* 42 (1967), pp. 51–78, in particular p. 56.

process of the *intellectus resolvens*. The intellect can resolve incompletely and halfway (*semiplene*) or perfectly and completely (*plene*). The incomplete resolution terminates in the transcendental determinations that are implicitly conceived in every concept. In the complete resolution, however, things are considered in their relation to the divine cause. "When the intellect makes a complete resolution, nothing can be understood if the first being is not known".[57]

The first known: The divine being

1. An important addition to the conclusion (in c. III of the *Itinerarium*) that the complete resolution of our intellect implies an understanding of the most pure and absolute being (*ens*) is made by Bonaventure in chapter V.[58] This chapter starts the third phase in the "journey of the mind to God". After contemplating God in the things outside us (*extra nos*), through "vestiges" of him, and in the things within us (*intra nos*), through his "image", the mind must finally pass over to the eternal things above us (*supra nos*), through the light that shines upon our mind.[59]

Bonaventure distinguishes two levels of this final step: the first is concerned with the essential attributes (*essentialia*) of God, the other with those proper (*propria*) to the divine Persons. Interestingly, he relates these different levels with the divine names of "being itself" (*ipsum esse*) and the "good" (*bonum*). "Being itself" is the principal source of the consideration of God's essential attributes, the "good" is the

[57] Cf. Bonaventure, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 28, dub. 1 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 504ab): "Alio modo contingit aliquid intelligere praeter alterum, intellectu resolvente; et iste intellectus considerat ea quae sunt rei essentialia, sicut potest intelligi subiectum sine propria passione. Et hoc potest esse dupliciter: aut intellectu resolvente plene et perfecte, aut intellectu deficiente et resolvente semiplene. Intellectu resolvente semiplene, potest intelligi aliquid esse, non intellecto primo ente. Intellectu autem resolvente perfecte, non potest intelligi aliquid, primo ente non intellecto". The significance of the Bonaventurian "resolution" was shown by L. Oeing-Hanhoff, "Die Methoden der Metaphysik im Mittelalter", in: P. Wilpert (ed.), *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter. Ihr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung* (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 2), Berlin 1963, pp. 71–91.

[58] Cf. C. Bérubé, "De la théologie de l'image à la philosophie de l'objet de l'intelligence chez saint Bonaventure", in: *S. Bonaventura 1274–1974*, Vol. III, Rome 1974, pp. 161–200. S. P. Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance, Science and Knowledge of God in the thirteenth Century*, Vol. I, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2001 (Studies in The History of Christian Thought, 98), pp. 201–245. W. Goris, "Two-Stages of God as First Known and the Transformation of the Concept of Reality in Bonaventure and Henry of Ghent", in: *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85/1 (2011), pp. 77–97.

[59] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, V, 1 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, p. 308b).

principalissimum fundamentum of the divine emanations.[60] From this perspective Bonaventure interprets the Scholastic dispute about the primary names of God. The first mode looks more to the Old Testament (Exodus) and holds that "He who is" is the primary divine name, as John Damascene says. The other mode looks to the New Testament, in which Christ attributes to God the name "Goodness" exclusively (Luke 18,19), and calls "the Good" the first name, as Dionysius the Areopagite, following Christ, teaches.[61]

A new element in Bonaventure's reflection on the divine name "being" (*esse*) is his claim that it is what is first known by the intellect. He argues that *esse* is so absolutely certain (*certissimum*) that it cannot be thought not to be, because the most pure being does not come to our mind except with the full flight of non-being. Being does not come to us by means of something else, since everything grasped by the intellect is grasped either as non-being, or as being in potency, or as being in act. Now non-being cannot be grasped except through being (since it is the privation of being), and being in potency cannot be understood except through being in act. Since "being" (*esse*) designates the pure act of being (*actum entis*), being is that which first falls into the intellect (*primo cadit in intellectu*)—Bonaventure's formulation evokes Avicenna's doctrine of the primary notions—, and this being is that which is pure act.[62] Crucial in Bonaventure's argumentation is the idea

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[60] *Ibid.*, VI, 1 (p. 310b). Cf. A. Speer, "*Principalissimum fundamentum*. Die Stellung des Guten und das Metaphysikverständnis Bonaventuras", in: W. Goris (ed.), *Die Metaphysik und das Gute. Aufsätze zu ihrem Verhältnis in Antike und Mittelalter Jan A. Aertsen zu Ehren*, Leuven 1999 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales. Bibliotheca, 2), pp. 107–138.

[61] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, V, 2 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, p. 308b): "Primus modus primo et principaliter defigit aspectum in ipsum *esse*, dicens, quod *qui est* est primum nomen Dei. Secundus modus defigit aspectum in ipsum *bonum*, dicens, hoc esse primum nomen Dei. Primum spectat potissime ad *vetus* testamentum, quod maxime praedicat divinae essentiae unitatem; unde dictum est Moysi: *Ego sum qui sum*; secundum ad *novum*, quod determinat personarum pluralitatem, baptizando *in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti*. Ideo magister noster Christus (…) nomen *bonitatis* Deo principaliter et praecise attribuit. *Nemo*, inquit, *bonus nisi solus Deus*. Damascenus igitur sequens Moysen dicit, quod *qui est* est primum nomen Dei; Dionysius sequens Christum dicit, quod *bonum* est primum nomen Dei".

[62] *Ibid.*, 3 (pp. 308b–309a): "Cum autem non-esse privatio sit essendi, non cadit in intellectu nisi per esse; esse autem non cadit per aliud, quia omne, quod intelligitur, aut intelligitur ut non ens, aut ut ens in potentia, aut ut ens in actu. Si igitur non ens non potest intelligi nisi per ens, et ens in potentia non nisi per ens in actu, et esse nominat ipsum purum actum entis: esse igitur est quod primo cadit in intellectu, et illud esse est quod est actus purus".

that "being" (*esse*) does not simply designate something in act, but the *pure* act of being and that, consequently, the being that is first known is pure act. But he does not clarify this crucial presupposition.

Bonaventure next considers three possibilities of further determining the being that is first known. It is not "particular being" (*esse particulare*) which is a limited being, since any particular being is mixed with potentiality. Neither is it to be identified as "analogous being" (*esse analogum*), for that has the least actuality, since it least (*minime*) is. The expression "analogous being" is remarkable: one has to distinguish it from "analogy of being", which, as we have seen, Bonaventure fully recognizes. He does not explain the term, but it must mean a concept of "common being" that comprises both members of the analogy: finite being and infinite being. Because this concept is a product of the activity of the intellect, it has the least actuality. It remains, Bonaventure concludes, that the being which is pure actuality and first known is the divine being (*esse divinum*).[63]

Yet is this conclusion not contrary to our intuition, for the human mind does not experience the knowledge of God as what is first known? What is astonishing to Bonaventure is rather the blindness of the intellect, which does not consider that which it sees first and without which it cannot know anything. Apparently, there are conscious and unconscious or implicit elements in human knowledge. He illustrates this idea through a comparison with the eye, which is so fixed on the variety of colors that it does not see the light through which it perceives other things, or if it does, does not notice it. Likewise our intellect, intent on particular and universal beings (*entia*), does not notice that being (*esse*) which is beyond all genera (*extra omne genus*), even though it comes first to the mind and is the condition for all further knowledge.[64]

2. The outcome of the reflections on the name "being" in c. V of the *Itinerarium* is the complement of the "complete resolution" in c. III, which ends in an understanding of the purest being. In c. V Bonaventure makes explicit that what is first known is the *divine* being. He is

[63] *Ibid.* (p. 309a): "Sed hoc non est esse particulare, quod est esse arctatum, quia permixtum est cum potentia, nec esse analogum, quia minime habet de actu, eo quod minime est. Restat igitur, quod illud esse est esse divinum".

[64] *Ibid.*, 4 (p. 309a).

alive to the innovative character of this claim. After having presented, in the *Hexaemeron*, a number of arguments for the thesis that God is first (*primum*), Bonaventure defines his position with personal emphasis: "The author of the *Book of Causes* said 'the first of created things is being (*esse*)', but I [Bonaventure] say 'the first of intellectual things is the first being'".[65] The opposition is suggestive. The fourth proposition in *De causis* has also been cited by Albertus Magnus in support of his view that the being which is first known is *created* being (see ch. 5.4.2). Distinctive of Bonaventure's transcendental thought is the identification of that which is cognitively prior with that which is ontologically prior: the divine being or the Absolute is the first known. This claim represents the Franciscan position in the thirteenth-century debate on what is first known.

A first formulation of the doctrine that God is the first known was presented by another Franciscan, Gilbert of Tournai. He was Bonaventure's successor in holding the Franciscan chair at the University of Paris (1257–1261/2) after Bonaventure had become Minister of the Order. But studies have shown that Gilbert's work *Rudimentum doctrinae* preceded and influenced Bonaventure's account.[66] Gilbert defends the view that in a creature God is first noticed by the intellect.[67] His argument has the same structure as Bonaventure's. Knowledge of a defective being presupposes knowledge of a perfect being without any defect. Gilbert also points to the inadequacy of "analogous being" (*ens analogum*) as a criterion for judging about beings. Analogous being

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[65] Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, X, 18 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. V, p. 379b): "Unde dixit ille: 'Prima rerum creatarum omnium est esse'; sed ego dico: prima rerum intellectualium est esse primum".

[66] C. Bérubé, *De la philosophie à la sagesse chez saint Bonaventure et Roger Bacon*, Rome 1976 (Bibliotheca Seraphico-Capuccina, 26), pp. 201–257. M. Laarmann, *Deus, Primum Cognitum. Die Lehre von Gott als dem Ersterkannten des menschlichen Intellekts bei Heinrich von Gent*, Münster 1999 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. Neue Folge, 52), pp. 271–278. W. Goris, "Die Anfänge der Auseinandersetzung um das Ersterkannte im 13. Jahrhundert: Guibert von Tournai, Bonaventura und Thomas von Aquin", in: *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 10 (1999), pp. 355–369.—Some chapters of Gilbert's *Rudimentum doctrinae* were edited by C. Bérubé and S. Gieben, "Guibert de Tournai et Robert Grosseteste sources inconnues de la doctrine de l'illumination, suivi de l'édition critique de trois chapitres du *Rudimentum doctrinae* de Guibert de Tournai", in: *S. Bonaventura 1274–1974*, vol. II, Rome 1974, pp. 627–654.

[67] Gilbert of Tournai, *Rudimentum doctrinae*, p. I, tract. III, c. 2 (ed. Bérubé / Gieben, pp. 647–651), the heading of which says: "Quod in creatura Deus primo ab intelligentia advertitur, et sic in eo quodammodo cetera cognoscuntur".

resides only in the intellect (*in sola intentione*) and thus has less being (*esse*) than any finite being in reality.[68]

Thomas Aquinas, who was Gilbert's colleague at the University of Paris, criticizes his conception and rejects the idea of a complete parallelism between the cognitive and the ontological order (see ch. 6.3.1). But Aquinas's reaction was not the end of the debate. Bonaventure renewed the view that the divine being is what is first known in a terminology similar to that of Aquinas. Whereas Thomas, for instance in the *Summa theologiae* I, q. 5, a. 2, states that "being" (*ens*) first comes in the conception of the intellect (*primo in conceptione intellectus cadit*), Bonaventure, in the *Itinerarium*, holds that *esse* is what first falls into the intellect (*quod primo cadit in intellectu*), and that this being is the divine being. This thesis is typical of the Franciscan form of transcendental thought.

Concluding observations

The Franciscan interest in the transcendental notions is theologically motivated: the doctrine appears in the *Summa Halensis* as the metaphysical basis for the explanation of the divine attributes "unity", "truth" and "goodness"; it plays a key role in Bonaventure's account of the ascent of the mind to God. The doctrine acquires distinctive Franciscan features with respect to the "reduction" of things to God. "The first determinations of being" (*Summa Halensis*) or "the noblest and most general conditions of being" (Bonaventure) are primarily seen as "vestiges" of the triune God in every creature, insofar as everything represents God as the threefold cause of things. This "reduction" expresses what we have called "the trinitarian motive" in Franciscan thought. The cognitive priority of the transcendental notions—they are the first concepts of the intellect—is radicalized: the *Summa Halensis* connects the "first impressions" upon the intellect with the idea of an innate knowledge of the first being. According to Bonaventure the "complete resolution" of human knowledge does not end in being in general but in the first being; that which is first known is the divine

[68] *Ibid.* (p. 648): "Non enim poteras iudicare illud esse verius illo, cum utrumque deficiat in essendo, nisi per ens quod est sine defectu essendi aliquo (…). Nec est illud ens ad quod recurris ens analogum, quia, cum tale sit in sola intentione, minus habet de esse quam lux vel aurum. Non igitur de entibus certe iuducabit anima per illud ens deficiens et vanum".

being. The parallelism between the cognitive order and the ontological order is characteristic of the Franciscan position.

4.3 Excursus: The transcendentality of the beautiful (*pulchrum*)

In treating of the "good" as the third transcendental determination of "being" (after "one" and "the true"), the *Summa Halensis* includes a separate article on the relation between the good and the beautiful: "Whether the good and the beautiful are the same in concept (*secundum intentionem*)?"[69] The question introduces a new element into the doctrine of the transcendentals, since the "beautiful" was ignored by Philip the Chancellor. The Franciscan *Summa* leaves no doubt about the authority behind the question, for in the arguments *pro* statements of Dionysius the Areopagite are cited which affirm the identity. We shall first consider this authority and the medieval reception of Dionysius, and then discuss the question whether the beautiful was a distinct transcendental.

4.3.1 *Dionysius the Areopagite: The good and the beautiful*

In the fourth chapter of *De divinis nominibus*, Dionysius deals, in close connection with the primary name "Good", with three other divine names: "Light", the "Beautiful" and "Love". The relation between these names is not expressly discussed, but their correlation is self-evident within the horizon of Platonism. The *locus classicus* for the connection between the "Good" and "Light" is Plato's famous analogy of the sun in the *Republic*. Determinative for the relation between the "Beautiful" and "Love" (*Eros*) is the *Symposium*. The direct influence of this work on Dionysius's account in *De divinis nominibus* is obvious. In the *Symposium* (211 A–B), the conditions of transience and relativity, which are characteristic of the beauty of things in our world, are denied as regards the highest Beautiful. It "does not come to be and pass away", "is not beautiful in one respect and ugly in another", but is "uniformly" always beautiful. This passage is reproduced verbatim

[69] Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, I, tract. III, q. 3, a. 2, n. 103 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, pp. 162–163).

by Dionysius in his explanation of the name "Beautiful", without indicating his source.[70] Plato's description of the Idea of the Beautiful was eminently suited to show the uniqueness and transcendence of the divine beauty.

Dionysius presents three reasons for the attribution of the name "Beauty" to God.[71] First, God confers beauty to all beings according to their natures, since he is "the cause of the consonance and splendour in everything". Secondly, he calls everything to him, whence he is called *kallos*. Dionysius relies on an etymology that goes back to Plato, according to which the name "Beauty" (*kallos*) is derived from the Greek term for "to call" (*kalein*).[72] Finally, God gathers everything in everything; every concord and harmony originates from him. What is noteworthy in this argument is that Dionysius mentions two features of beauty: "consonance" and "splendor" or "clarity". His twofold determination of the essence of beauty became the authoritative text for the Scholastic doctrine of beauty. The treatise *De venustate mundi et pulchritudine Dei* of Denys the Carthusian (1401/2–1471), for instance, begins with the statement: "What the beautiful and its *ratio* is, is principally to be taken from St. Dionysius's contemplative writings".[73]

Still another Dionysian conception, that of the place of beauty, became directive for medieval discussions. The Areopagite concludes that "the good and the beautiful are the same" and adduces arguments for this identity. The first one is based on the causality of the good and beautiful; they are the cause of all things in a threefold sense: as *arche, telos* and *paradigma*. "All things desire the good and beautiful in every causal respect". The second argument for the identity concerns the common extension of the two determinations: There is "nothing that does not participate in the beautiful and the good".[74] In the medieval

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[70] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, n. 7 (ed. B. R. Suchla, in: *Corpus dionysiacum*, Vol. I, Berlin – New York 1990 (Patristische Texte und Studien, 33), p. 151).

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] Plato, *Cratylos*, 416 C. Cf. Proclus, *Theologia Platonis*, I, c. 24 (ed. H. D. Saffrey / L. G. Westerink, Paris 1968, vol. I, p. 108).

[73] Denys the Carthusian, *De venustate mundi et pulchritudine Dei*, a. 1 (ed. Coloniensium cura et labore monachorum S. Ordinis Cartusiensis), in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. 34, Tournai 1907, p. 227): "Quid autem sit pulchrum, et quae ratio ejus, originaliter sumitur ex theoricis S. Dionysii documentis".

[74] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, n. 7 (ed. Suchla, p. 152).

reception of Dionysius, however, his thesis of the identity of the good and the beautiful was modified.

4.3.2 *The medieval reception of Dionysius: The good, the beautiful and the true*

1. In reply to the question "Whether the good and the beautiful are the same in concept?", the *Summa Halensis* concludes that, if the "good" is taken as *honestum*, that is, as the befitting or virtuous, which is sought for its own sake, it is identical with the beautiful. But they differ, it is added, conceptually. The author works out this difference with respect to the threefold causality that Dionysius had attributed to the beautiful: it is the efficient, final and exemplary cause of all things. The most important difference in terms of its historical effect is that concerning the final cause. According to the *Summa* "the beautiful is a disposition of the good insofar as it pleases the apprehension, whereas the good relates to the disposition insofar as it delights our affection".[75] This differentiation, in which the "beautiful" is characterized by its relation to the apprehension, had a lasting influence on later authors.

The effect of the modification of the Dionysian identity thesis becomes apparent in the second book of the *Summa*, which discusses beauty in the context of the consideration of the general "conditions" of any creature, namely *verum—bonum—pulcrum*. The author states that "truth" and "goodness" had already been treated in the first book—in the treatise on the essential attributes of God—so that he will now focus on beauty. In the first book, however, the triad discussed was not "true"—"good"—"beautiful", but *unum—verum—bonum*.[76]

The *Summa* observes that the beautiful and the good are the same in substance, as Dionysius holds, but that there is a conceptual difference. Hence the question is what *pulcrum* adds to *ens*, by which it differs from *bonum*. Both the "beautiful" and the "good" express the disposition with respect to a cause: the "good" with respect to the final cause, the "beautiful" with respect to the formal cause. A sign that the

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[75] Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, I, tract. III, q. 3, a. 2, n. 103 (ed. Quaracchi, Vol. I, p. 162): "Differunt tamen: nam pulcrum dicit dispositionem boni secundum quod est placitum apprehensioni, bonum vero respicit dispositionem secundum quam delectat affectionem; et sic differunt secundum intentionem causae finalis".

[76] *Ibid.*, II, inq. I, tract. II, q. 3, c. 1, n. 75 (Vol. II, p. 99).

beauty of a thing is derived from the form is the fact that we usually call that which is *speciosus* "beautiful", and the species is taken from the form.[77]

Yet a new problem arises here, which indicates the shift of the position of beauty in the Dionysius reception. It holds not only for the "beautiful" that it is taken from the form, but also for "the true", so that the question what the difference between these determinations is urges itself. The *Summa* argues that "truth is a disposition of the form that is related to the interior (of a thing), whereas beauty is a disposition of the form that is related to the exterior". The opposition between "inner" and "outer" is hardly worked out. The author only remarks that we usually call that "beautiful" whose sight (*aspectus*) is fitting.[78] Apparently he has different types of knowledge in mind and connects "truth" with a consideration of the intellect that is directed to the inner nature of a thing.

2. In his commentary on *De divinis nominibus* (ca. 1250), Albert the Great raises two preliminary questions concerning Dionysius's exposition of beauty. The first one bears upon the order of the divine names "Light", "Beautiful" and "Love". Why does Dionysius, after his treatment of the "Good", follow just this order in c. 4 of his work?

Albert argues that this order must be understood according to the order of the processes in the mind. The first process is the apprehension of the true—it is the knowledge of theoretical reason, which is directed at truth as such. Next, the true "incandesces" (*excandescit*) and takes the character of good; it is the knowledge of practical reason, which arises through the "extension" (*extensio*) of the true to the good. This knowledge finally sets desire in motion, for desire is not

[77] *Ibid.*: "'Pulcrum et bonum sunt idem in substantia', sicut habetur a Dionysio (…), sed aliqua est differentia rationis. Quaeritur ergo, cum utrumque addat super ens, quod addit pulcrum super ens quo differt a bono. Utrumque autem dicit dispositionem respectu alicuius causae; sed bonum dicit respectu causae finalis; cum ergo pulcrum differat ratione a bono respectu alterius causae, sumetur nonnisi respectu causae formalis. Quod etiam videtur: (…) unde speciosum pulcrum dicere solebamus; sed species sumitur ex parte formae: ergo pulcrum ex parte formae".

[78] *Ibid.*: "Cum veritas similiter accipiatur ex illa parte, non differunt verum et pulcrum; quod si differunt, quae ergo est differentia vel causa differendi? Respondeo quod veritas est dispositio ex parte formae relata ad interius, pulcritudo vero est dispositio ex parte formae relata ad exterius: solebamus enim pulcrum dicere quod in se habebat unde conveniens esset in aspectu".

moved unless directed by a prior apprehension.[79] To these processes corresponds, according to Albert, Dionysius's order of the names. To the apprehension of the true in the absolute sense there corresponds "Light"; to the apprehension of the true insofar as it has the character of the good there corresponds "the Beautiful"; to the movement of desire there corresponds "Love".[80]

In Albert's account, the beautiful is linked with the true, not however with the true as such but with the true that becomes good *per extensionem*, a distinction that is founded on the difference between the theoretical and the practical intellect. By relating the beautiful to *practical* reason that is directed at a work, Albert's exposition is the most significant determination of the position of beauty in the Middle Ages. Two centuries later, Nicholas of Cusa was obviously struck by Albert's comments and cites them verbatim in his sermon *Tota pulchra es, amica mea*. This sermon (from the year 1456) actually is a small treatise on beauty, of which the first part is a paraphrase of Albert's positioning of beauty in his commentary on *De divinis nominibus*.[81]

The second preliminary question in Albert's commentary is the question "What is beauty?", which he directly relates to Dionysius's claim of the identity of the good and the beautiful. They are the same qua subject (*in subiecto*), but are conceptually (*in ratione*) different. The proper *ratio* of the "beautiful" is the resplendence (*resplendentia*) of the form on the proportioned parts of matter; the *ratio* of the "good" is that it attracts desire.[82] Albert evidently interprets the relationship

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[79] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, n. 71 (ed. P. Simon, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXXVII/1, Münster 1972, p. 181): "Prima autem processio, quae est in mentem, est secundum apprehensionem veri. Deinde illud verum excandescit et accipitur in ratione boni, et sic demum movetur desiderium ad ipsum; oportet enim motum desiderii antecedere duplicem apprehensionem, unam quae est in intellectu speculativo, quae est ipsius veri absolute, et alteram quae est in intellectu practico per extensionem de vero in rationem boni, et tunc primo erit motus desiderii ad bonum".

[80] *Ibid.*: "Apprehensioni igitur ipsius veri absolute respondet processio luminis, apprehensioni vero veri, secundum quod habet rationem boni, respondet processio pulchri, motui vero desiderii respondet processio diligibilis; et ideo primo de lumine, secundo de pulchro, tertio de diligibili erat determinandum".

[81] Nicholas of Cusa, *Tota pulchra es, amica mea* (Sermo de pulchritudine) (ed. G. Santinello, Padua 1959 (Estratto dagli Atti e memorie della Accademia patavina di SS.LL.AA. Classe di scienze morali, lettere e arti, 71), p. 32). Cf. G. Santinello, *Il pensiero di Nicolò Cusano nella sua prospettiva estetica*, Padua 1958.

[82] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, n. 72 (ed. Simon, p. 182): "Sic igitur dicimus, quod pulchrum et honestum sunt idem in subiecto, differunt autem in ratione, quia ratio pulchri in universali consistit in resplendentia formae

of the two features of the beautiful that are mentioned by Dionysius—"consonance" and "clarity"—according to the scheme of matter and form: the formal aspect of beauty is the illuminating splendour, its material aspect the proportioned.

3. Although Thomas Aquinas's commentary on *De divinis nominibus* (which can be dated to 1265–67), is a "literal" commentary, it clearly goes beyond the *littera* with respect to the Dionysian thesis of the identity between the good and the beautiful. Thomas, too, modifies this thesis: the beautiful and the good are indeed the same in reality (*idem subiecto*) and convertible with one another, but nevertheless a conceptual difference between them exists. The *ratio* of the "beautiful" is not identical with that of the "good", for the "beautiful" adds something to the "good" conceptually, namely, an ordering to the cognitive power.[83]

The relation of the beautiful to cognition is also explicitly stated in Thomas's often cited definition in his *Summa theologiae* (I, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1): "Those things are called beautiful which please when they are seen" (*quae visa placent*). The beautiful is that which pleases and delights, it is that in which the appetite comes to rest. The beautiful is thereby set in close relation to the good, for the good is the proper object of appetite, as Aristotle's definition "the good is that which all desire" indicates. Yet at the same time Thomas's definition relates the beautiful to vision, not exclusively meaning knowledge by sense. Typical of the beautiful, he emphasizes, is its relation to the cognitive power (*vis cognoscitiva*).[84]

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super partes materiae proportionatas (…), honesti autem ratio consistit in hoc quod trahit ad se desiderium". Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "'Über das Schöne'—Alberts des Großen Kölner Vorlesungen zu Dionysius Areopagita", in: L. Honnefelder / N. Trippen / A. Wolf (eds.), *Dombau und Theologie im mittelalterlichen Köln*, Köln 1998 (Studien zum Kölner Dom, 6), pp. 417–427.

[83] Thomas Aquinas, *In De divinis nominibus expositio*, c. 4, lect. 5, n. 356 (ed. C. Pera, Turin-Rome 1950, p. 115): "Quamvis autem pulchrum et bonum sint idem subiecto, quia tam claritas quam consonantia sub ratione boni continentur, tamen ratione differunt: nam pulchrum addit supra bonum, ordinem ad vim cognoscitivam illud esse huiusmodi". Cf. *ibid*., c. 4, lect. 22, n. 590 (ed. Pera, p. 216): "(…) pulchrum convertitur cum bono".

[84] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. IV, Rome 1888, p. 61): "Pulchrum autem respicit vim cognoscitivam: pulchra enim dicuntur quae visa placent". This "definition" of the beautiful was quoted by James Joyce in his novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, London, 1972, p. 211.

4. The emphasis on the relation of the beautiful to knowledge is, compared with Dionysius's thought, a new element and an original contribution of medieval philosophy. The emphasis on the cognitive aspect leads to a shift of the locus of beauty in the direction of "truth". Its closer connection with the "true" is reinforced by the notion of "clarity" or "splendor", which Albert the Great considers as the formal feature of beauty. Thomas Aquinas identifies "clarity" with "truth" and the knowability of things.[85]

This development is reflected in the fifteenth-century treatise *De venustate mundi* by Denys the Carthusian. He proposes a definition of beauty, in which the cognitive moment is decisive. He argues that, although the beautiful and the good really coincide, they nevertheless differ conceptually and refers to Thomas Aquinas, according to whom the "good" is said to be in relation to the appetite, but the "beautiful" in relation to the cognitive power. Just as the "good" is consequently described as "that which all desire", so some describe the "beautiful" as "that which all behold or know" (*quod omnia adspiciunt vel cognoscunt*). That is to say that the beautiful, by its actuality, can move or attract the look of the knower to its knowledge (*notitia*) or sight.[86] The modification of the Dionysian identity thesis, started in the thirteenth century, leads up to an almost purely cognitive definition of beauty by Denys who calls himself "the minor Dionysius". In art. 3 of his treatise, he discusses the distinction between "the beautiful" and "the true" and verbatim adopts the explication given in the *Summa Halensis*.

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[85] Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio super Iob ad litteram*, c. 40 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXVI, Rome 1965, p. 214): "Deus enim non habet circumdatum decorem quasi superadditum eius essentiae sed ipsa essentia eius est decor, per quem intelligitur ipsa claritas sive veritas". *In IV Sententiarum*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 3 ad 7 (ed. E. Fretté, in: *Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, Vol. 11, Paris 1874, p. 491): "claritas dei dicitur veritas suae essentiae, per quam cognoscibilis est, sicut sol per suam claritatem".

[86] Denys the Cartusian, *De venustate mundi et pulchritudine Dei*, a. 1 (ed. Coloniensium, Vol. 34, p. 227): "Quamvis igitur pulchrum et bonum realiter convertantur atque coincidant, tamen formaliter distinguuntur: quoniam juxta Thomam in prima parte, bonum dicitur in ordine seu per comparationem ad potentiam appetitivam, pulchrum vero per comparationem ad cognitivam potentiam. Quemadmodum ergo bonum describitur esse quod omnia appetunt (…); sic pulchrum quidam esse describunt quod omnia adspiciunt vel cognoscunt, hoc est, quod sua actualitate, cognoscentis intuitum ad suam notitiam aut ad adspectum movere sive allicere potest".

4.3.3 *The beautiful: A distinct transcendental property?*

The context of the Scholastic discussions on beauty has been the treatment of the "good" since the *Summa Halensis*. Because *bonum* is a transcendental property of being, the status of the beautiful also seems to be that which is transcendental. One of Dionysius's arguments for the identity of the good and the beautiful suggests such a perspective: "There is nothing that does not participate in the good and the beautiful". The Areopagite affirms the universal extension of the beautiful to all being, that is, its commonness. Furthermore, in the reception of Dionysius, his identity thesis was modified by several commentators, for instance Thomas Aquinas, according to the model of a real identity and a conceptual difference, which is characteristic of the relation between the transcendentals. The beautiful thus seems to be a distinct transcendental property.

The same scholar who published a pioneering study on the beginning of the doctrine of the transcendentals in Philip the Chancellor, Henri Pouillon, also wrote an influential essay on beauty as a transcendental property.[87] A number of prominent scholars have maintained the view that the beautiful did not only acquire a distinct place in the theory of the transcendentals, but even had a special, synthetic function. Three examples may suffice.

In his influential book *Art and Scholasticism*, Jacques Maritain holds that the beautiful "is in fact the splendor of all the transcendentals together".[88] The Swiss theologian Hans-Urs von Balthasar composed an impressive "trilogy", in which the whole of theology is considered in the light of the triad "*verum—bonum—pulchrum*". The last transcendental is the primary notion for him, because the beautiful maintains the others: it confers its attraction upon the good and its conclusiveness upon the true.[89] Von Balthasar speaks of "the birth of transcendental aesthetics" in the thirteenth century, when, for the first time in metaphysics, the Franciscans formulated the view that being as such is

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[87] H. Pouillon, "La beauté, propriété transcendantale chez les Scolastiques (1220–1270)", in: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 21 (1946), pp. 263–329.

[88] J. Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism: with other essays* (transl. by J. F. Scanlan), New York 1939, p. 30.

[89] H.-U. von Balthasar, *Herrlichkeit. Eine theologische Ästhetik*, Vol. III/1: *Im Raum der Metaphysik*, Einsiedeln 1965, p. 39. Cf. M. Saint-Pierre, *Beauté, bonté, verité chez Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Québec – Paris 1998.

beautiful.[90] In his studies *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* and *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, Umberto Eco pays much attention to a question he calls "one of the main problems of Scholastic aesthetics", namely, "the problem of integrating, on the metaphysical level, beauty with other forms of value". Scholastic philosophy solved the problem by the doctrine of the *transcendentia*, because this doctrine tried to allow for both the autonomy of values and their place within a unitary vision of the transcendental aspects of being.[91] According to Eco, the *Summa Halensis* "decisively solved the problem of the transcendental character of beauty, and its distinction from other values".[92]

In support of the transcendentality of beauty

The dominant picture in recent scholarship seems to be confirmed by Denys the Carthusian's summary of the medieval view of beauty. In *De venustate mundi* he claims that "according to the commentators on Dionysius, just as the good, the true and the one are convertible with being, the beautiful is convertible with being, so that every being is beautiful".[93] But what evidence can we find in medieval texts for the claim that the beautiful is a distinct transcendental property of being? Several medieval authors teach the universality of the beautiful, but there are in fact only two writings that explicitly contend its distinct transcendentality, although in different manners.

1. The most remarkable work is an anonymous treatise, found in the library of Assisi and edited under the anachronistic title *Tractatus de transcendentalibus entis conditionibus*.[94] The work belongs to the Franciscan milieu; it is an excerpt from the *Summa Halensis* to which the author, probably a student of Alexander of Hales, attaches his own

[90] H.-U. von Balthasar, *Herrlichkeit*, Vol. III/1, pp. 334 and 340.

[91] U. Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* (transl. by H. Bredin), New Haven – London 1986, pp. 16, 19. Cf. id., *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas* (transl. by H. Bredin), Cambridge, Mass., 1988, pp. 20–48.

[92] U. Eco, *Art and Beauty*, p. 23.

[93] Denys the Cartusian, *De venustate mundi*, a. 1 (ed. Coloniensium, Vol. 34, p. 227): "Itaque, secundum B. Dionysii commentatores, quemadmodum bonum et verum ac unum convertuntur cum ente, ita et pulchrum: ita quod omne ens est pulchrum, sicut omne ens dicitur bonum et verum ac unum".

[94] D. Halcour (ed.), "*Tractatus de transcendentalibus entis conditionibus* (Assisi, Biblioteca Communale, Codex 186)", in: *Franziskanische Studien* 41 (1959), pp. 41–106. On the term "transcendental" in the title of the treatise, see our remarks in ch. 1.1.

conclusions. The treatise is divided into three articles: on "the good" (I), "the one" (II), and "the true" (III). The first question of the first article, however, begins with the surprising statement that there are *four* general "conditions" of being: *unum, verum, bonum* and *pulchrum*. The author therefore examines how they are distinguished from one another.[95]

The basic idea of his reply is that these four conditions are founded on "being" (*ens*), but add something conceptual to it. "One", "true", "good" and "the beautiful" presuppose the concept of "being", in which they agree.[96] Their conceptual differences are formulated in terms of "indivision", which was the model in Philip the Chancellor's account of the transcendentals. "One" adds indivision as such to "being"; "the true" adds the indivision of form from matter or of '*quod est*' from '*quo est*'; "the good" adds the indivision of potency from act. The "beautiful" is not included in this explanation, but the author adds another explication, derived from the *Summa Halensis*, in which the "conditions" of being are distinguished according to their different relations to the divine causality: "the one" refers to the efficient cause, "the true" to the formal cause, "the good" to the final cause, but "the beautiful" encompasses all these causes and is common to them.[97]

In this treatise the beautiful is thus given a place of its own in virtue of its synthesizing function. This function is not further explained or grounded. I suspect that the author arrived at his thesis by bringing two ideas together. The causal order of the transcendental determinations of "being" in the *Summa Halensis* is combined with Dionysius's statement that the beautiful is the cause of all things in three respects. In Dionysius this applies to the good as well, on the basis of which the Areopagite concludes that the good and the beautiful are identical. But the anonymous writer seems to have drawn the conclusion from this statement that the beautiful, unlike the other transcendentals, is related to all three causes.

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[95] *Tractatus de transcendentalibus*, a. 1, q. 1 (ed. Halcour, p. 64): "Cum assignentur quattuor conditiones entis communiter, scilicet unum, verum, bonum et pulchrum, quaeritur: Qualiter distinguuntur et penes quid sumantur".

[96] *Ibid.* (p. 65): "Dicendum, quod istae conditiones fundantur supra ens, addunt enim aliquam rationem. Unde unum, verum, bonum et pulcrum praesupponunt intellectum entis, in quo communicant".

[97] *Ibid.*: "Unde unum respicit causam efficientem, verum formalem, bonum autem finalem secundum appropriationem. Sed pulcrum circuit omnem causam et est commune ad ista".

Modern scholarship sometimes conveys the impression that the synthesizing view of the Assisi-treatise is *the* medieval answer to the question concerning the transcendentality of the beautiful. Against this it must be emphasized that its claim remained an isolated statement. Even Denys the Carthusian does not refer to it nor does any other medieval writing maintain the synthesizing function of the beautiful.

2. Another attempt to establish beauty as a transcendental property of being was made in the work *De summo bono*, composed by Ulrich of Strasbourg († 1277), the favorite student of Albert the Great. It presents a systematic account of theology on the basis of Dionysius's *De divinis nominibus*, that is, an account centered on the "Good". This work also contains an exposition of the "Beautiful", on which Martin Grabmann, the first editor of the text, made the comment: "Nowhere in High Scholasticism (…) have I found such an extensive, coherent and systematic account of the theory of beauty".[98]

After having shown the difference between the notions of the "good" and the "beautiful" by adopting Albert the Great's definition of beauty, Ulrich makes an explicit remark on the relation of the beautiful to being. He refers to Augustine for the idea that they are convertible with each other: Every creature stems from the divine art that is the exemplary cause of all things. It therefore possesses a *species* or form and is as such *speciosus*, that is, "beautiful". The form in the sense of *species* expresses the *ratio* which the "beautiful" adds to "being", namely, the shining of the form on matter.[99] Ulrich's argument for the convertibility, however, is unsatisfactory, insofar as it transfers that which originally constituted the conceptual difference between the beautiful and the *good* to the difference between the beautiful and *being*.

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[98] Ulrich of Strasbourg, *De summo bono*, II, tract. 4 (ed. A. de Libera, Hamburg 1987 (Corpus Philosophorum Teutonicorum Medii Aevi, I/2), pp. 54–63). Cf. M. Grabmann, "Des Ulrich Engelberti von Strassburg O. Pr. († 1277) Abhandlung *De pulchro*: Untersuchungen und Texte", in: *Gesammelte Akademieabhandlungen*, Vol. 1, Paderborn 1979, pp. 177–260, p. 210.

[99] Ulrich of Strasbourg, *De summo bono*, II, tract. 3, c. 4 (ed. de Libera, p. 57): "Quia etiam omne quod arte divina factum est, speciem aliquam habet, qua formatur, ut dicit Augustinus in VI *De Trinitate*, sequitur, quod pulchrum sicut et bonum convertitur cum ente secundum supposita, sed secundum essentiam addit super ipsum supra dictam rationem formalitatis" [*sc*. "lumen formale et intellectuale splendens super materiam"].

The silence of medieval authors[100]

Most medieval authors, however, are, in their systematic accounts of the transcendentals, silent on the position of beauty in the order of the properties of being and restrict themselves to the triad "*unum—verum—bonum*".

1. In reaction to Umberto Eco's claim that the *Summa*, attributed to Alexander of Hales, "decisively solved the problem of the transcendental character of beauty, and its distinction from other values", we can establish two things. The first observation is a simple fact. The first book of the *Summa Halensis* gives an extensive account of the "first determinations of being", namely, "the one", "the true" and "the good", but does not incorporate "the beautiful" into this list. Eco acknowledges this fact, but advances in explanation "the caution and prudence with which the medievals engaged in innovation". There was, after all, a traditional number of transcendentals, and it was no small thing to alter it. "The boldness of the innovation required caution in its implementation".[101] This argument is very weak in light of the facts that the doctrine of the transcendentals itself was a philosophical innovation and that ten years after the *Summa Halensis* Thomas Aquinas, in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, presents six transcendentals.

The other observation is that the *Summa* does not speak about the beautiful as expressing a universal mode of *being*. The exposition is restricted to the differentiation between the *good* and the beautiful. This differentiation is, as we have seen, a new element in comparison with pseudo-Dionysius, yet it still does not provide a sufficient reason for the distinctive transcendentality of the beautiful. The beautiful in the Franciscan School has been called an "epiphenomenon" of the good;[102] it is only discussed within the framework of this transcendental notion.

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[100] I critically dealt with the question of the transcendentality of the beautiful in two essays: "Beauty in the Middle Ages: A Forgotten Transcendental?", in: *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 1 (1991), pp. 68–97; "Die Frage nach der Transzendentalität der Schönheit im Mittelalter", in: B. Mojsisch / O. Pluta (eds.), *Historia Philosophiae Medii Aevi, Festschrift für Kurt Flasch*, Amsterdam, 1991, pp. 1–22.

[101] U. Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, p. 44. Cf. id., *Art and Beauty*, p. 24.

[102] D. Halcour, *Die Lehre vom Schönen im Rahmen der Transzendentalienlehre der Metaphysik der frühen Franziskanerschule von Paris*, Freiburg 1957 [unpublished Doctoral Thesis], p. 55.

2. Albert the Great's commentary on *De divinis nominibus* is typical of the medieval view of the transcendentality of the beautiful. On the one hand, he establishes that *pulchrum*, just like *bonum*, is an *universalis intentio*,[103] but, on the other, he does not give this notion a place in his doctrine of the transcendentals. Twice in his commentary, Albert presents a systematic account of the doctrine, in which he includes "being", "one", "true", and "good", but completely ignores the beautiful.[104]

3. The question as to the transcendentality of the beautiful in Thomas Aquinas confronts us with a striking paradox. The discussion of beauty occupies a marginal place in his systematic works; nowhere does he devote a separate *quaestio* to this subject. Etienne Gilson has spoken in this regard of a "forgotten transcendental".[105] But in the Thomas study of the last decades, more attention has been devoted to the beautiful than to any other transcendental.[106] And most modern scholars claim that it does have a transcendental status in Thomas. Several studies even go a step further and endeavor to show that the beautiful has a special place among the transcendentals. Maritain's work *Art and Scholasticism* gave a strong impulse to this trend in research. He regards the beautiful as "the splendour of all the transcendentals together".[107] Francis J. Kovach arrives at the conclusion that the beautiful is "the richest, the most noble, and the most comprehensive of all transcendentals". It is "the only transcendental that includes all the other transcendentals".[108]

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[103] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, n. 89 ad 5 (ed. Simon, p. 194): "(…) bonum et pulchrum sunt universales intentiones".

[104] *Ibid*., n. 5 (ed. Simon, p. 116) and c. 5, n. 20 (ed. Simon, p. 314).

[105] E. Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy*, New York 1960, pp. 159–63: "The Forgotten Transcendental: *Pulchrum*".

[106] Cf. J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals. The Case of Thomas Aquinas*, New York-Köln 1996 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 52), pp. 335–359 (with lit.).

[107] J. Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, p. 172, n. 63b.

[108] F. J. Kovach, *Die Ästhetik des Thomas von Aquin*, Berlin-New York 1961 (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie, 3), p. 214; id., "The Transcendentality of Beauty in Thomas Aquinas", in: P. Wilpert (ed.), *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter*, Berlin 1963 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 2), pp. 386–392. Cf. W. Czapiewski, *Das Schöne bei Thomas von Aquin*, Freiburg 1964 (Freiburger Theologische Studien, 82). G. Pöltner, *Schönheit. Eine Untersuchung zum Ursprung des Denkens bei Thomas von Aquin*, Wien-Freiburg-Basel 1978.

Against the opinions of this series of scholars there is, however, one obvious but weighty objection. If the beautiful were such a central transcendental for Thomas, as they suggest, why does he omit it in his most complete account in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1? For Maritain the question does not constitute a serious problem. The "classic table" in *De veritate* "does not exhaust all transcendental values". The reason that the beautiful is not included is "that it can be reduced to one of them", namely, to the good.[109] This argument is not convincing. If the beautiful is a distinct transcendental, then it must conceptually add a value to being that cannot be reduced to another transcendental.

4. The picture in the most influential accounts after Aquinas is not different. Henry of Ghent sometimes mentions "the beautiful" in his list of "first intentions",[110] but does not incorporate the notion into his systematic accounts of the transcendentals. Nor has "the beautiful" a distinct place in Duns Scotus's ordering of these concepts. The two fourteenth-century treatises on the transcendentals, the *Tractatus de sex transcendentibus*, written by Francis de Prato, and the *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, composed by Francis of Meyronnes, are silent on *pulchrum*. In his *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, Suárez extensively deals with "being" and its properties "one", "true", and "good", but his systematically elaborated theory of the transcendentals does not consider "the beautiful".

5. Typical is the attitude of Denys the Carthusian, one of the few medieval authors who composed a comprehensive treatise on beauty. Near the end of his life he wrote a small compendium of philosophy, titled *Elementatio philosophica*.[111] Not only the title but also the form of this work imitates Proclus: It presents an ordered series of propositions

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[109] J. Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, p. 172, n. 63b.

[110] Cf. Henry of Ghent, *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum*, a. 24, q. 6 (ed. L. Badius, Vol. I, Paris 1520 [reprinted in St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1953], fol. 142rQ): "(…) ut est ens, bonum, unum, verum, pulchrum". *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3 (ed. R. Macken, in: *Opera Omnia*, Vol. XXVII, Leuven 1991 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy. De Wulf-Mansion Centre, Series 2), p. 192).

[111] Denys the Cartusian, *Elementatio philosophica seu Compendium philosophiae* (ed. Coloniensium cura et labore monachorum S. Ordinis Cartusiensis, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. 33, Tournai 1907, pp. 21–104). Cf. K. Emery, Jr., "The Matter and Order of Philosophy according to Denys the Carthusian", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer, *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, Berlin-New York 1998 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 26), pp. 667–679.

with appended comments. Denys twice treats the transcendentals. He first deals with the topic in the section "On Metaphysics in General" (prop. 16: *Unum, et verum, ac bonum convertibilia sunt cum ente; et ratione, non re, distinguuntur ab illo, atque ab invicem*). He returns to the transcendentals as the culmination of philosophical inquiry: *De uno, vero et bono* (prop. 90–93). It is illustrative of the position of beauty that almost as an afterthought, Denys notes that "divine Dionysius" taught that "the beautiful" (*pulchrum*) also is a transcendental convertible with "being".[112] Even the author of *De venustate mundi* says no more.

Conclusion

The conclusion of our analysis is that there exists a strong discrepancy between the medieval texts and the picture sketched of the transcendentality of the beautiful in modern studies. A doctrinal motive can explain the importance scholars like Maritain and von Balthasar attach to the beautiful. It is not by coincidence that they speak of "medieval aethetics" or "the birth of transcendental aesthetics" in the thirteenth century. Their reading of medieval texts is certainly influenced by the modern triad "True—Good—Beautiful". This triad is an invention of the nineteenth century and linked with the birth of aesthetics as an autonomous philosophical discipline.[113] It presupposes that human reason is related to reality in three different ways: theoretical, practical and aesthetical. In search of an aesthetics based on Scholastic principles, modern scholarship gives a weight to the beautiful that it never had in the Middle Ages. The modern triad is projected backward into the past, with the effect that the beautiful has to acquire a distinct place in the medieval doctrine of the transcendentals.

The incorporation of the beautiful into the doctrine, however, is faced with inner, philosophical difficulties. A first difficulty is that this incorporation requires the integration of two different philosophical perspectives. Medieval discussions on "beauty" generally take place within the framework of the "good". Its treatment is determined by

[112] Denys the Cartusian, *Elementatio philosophica seu Compendium philosophiae*, prop. 92 (ed. Coloniensium, Vol. 33, p. 97): "At vero divinus Dionysius perhibet etiam pulchrum converti cum ente".

[113] P. O. Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts", in: id., *Renaissance Thought and the Arts. Collected Essays*, Princeton 1990, pp. 163–227, in particular pp. 203–204. Cf. Maritain's discussion of Kant's Aesthetics in *Art and Scholasticism*, pp. 161–163.

the Platonic-Dionysian perspective of a metaphysics of the *good*. The transcendental perspective, on the other hand, is dominated by the Aristotelian–Avicennian metaphysics of *being*. "Being" is the first transcendental; the other transcendentals conceptually add something to it, they express general modes of being. The question whether the beautiful is a distinct transcendental is therefore not resolved until it has become clear what general mode of *being* the beautiful expresses that is not yet expressed by the other transcendentals.

As we have seen, medieval authors maintain a conceptual non-identity between the beautiful and the good: the "beautiful" adds to the "good" a relation to the cognitive power. This differentiation is a new element in comparison with Dionysius, but it does not provide a sufficient basis for the distinctive transcendentality of the beautiful. If one should object that the good is convertible with being and that an addition to the good therefore implies an addition to being, then the position of the beautiful remains problematic in this argumentation: What the "beautiful" adds to the "good" is just what the "true" adds to "being". One can therefore not interpret the addition of the beautiful to the *good* in such a way that this addition would be equivalent to an addition to *being*. The transcendental status of the beautiful remained unclear in the Middle Ages, because the Platonic-Dionysian perspective and the transcendental-ontological perspective were never fully integrated. The beautiful was only incidentally determined in relation to the transcendental "being".

Another difficulty for the incorporation of the beautiful into the doctrine of the transcendentals concerns their foundation. Medieval thinkers present different accounts of it. In the Franciscan tradition, the transcendentals are considered in relation to the first, universal cause. The "one", "true" and "good" express the three aspects (efficient, exemplary and final) of its causality. Therefore, the only way in which the Assisi treatise could introduce the beautiful as a fourth transcendental property was by claiming its synthesizing function. An important innovation in Aquinas's derivation of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, was the correlation he introduced between being and the human soul, which "is in a sense all things" (*quodammodo omnia*). He understands the transcendentals "true" and "good" in relation to the human faculties of intellect and will. The problem for the incorporation of the beautiful is then obvious. Since there does not exist another human faculty that has a universal extension, there is no room for another distinct relational transcendental.

CHAPTER FIVE

ALBERTUS MAGNUS: DIFFERENT TRADITIONS OF THOUGHT AND THE TRANSCENDENTALS

The doctrine of the transcendentals was not only elaborated in the Franciscan school, but also by the Dominican Albert "the German" (*Teutonicus*) (ca. 1200–1280), known as *Albertus Magnus* since the middle of the fourteenth century. Like Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure, he was active at the University of Paris, where he occupied one of the two Dominican chairs in the Theological Faculty from 1242 to 1248. Albert was the main figure in the process of assimilating philosophy into the Latin world.[1] During his long career the *Doctor universalis* realized five large projects—(in chronological order) the Parisian *Summa*, the commentary on the *Sentences*, the commenting on the complete *corpus dionysiacum*, the commenting on the entire Aristotelian *corpus*, and the *Summa theologiae*. From these projects one can gather Albert's importance for the development of the theory of the transcendentals;[2] he connected the doctrine with both the Platonic-Dionysian and the

[1] For Albert's philosophical importance, cf. A. de Libera, *Albert le Grand et la philosophie*, Paris 1990; revised version: *Métaphysique et noétique: Albert le Grand*, Paris 2005. J. A. Aertsen, "Albertus Magnus und die mittelalterliche Philosophie", in: *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 21 (1996), pp. 111–128. L. Honnefelder, "Die philosophiegeschichtliche Bedeutung Alberts des Großen", in: L. Honnefelder, R. Wood / M. Dreyer / M-A. Aris (eds.), *Albertus Magnus and the Beginnings of the Medieval Reception of Aristotle in the Latin West. From Richardus Rufus to Franciscus de Mayronis*, Münster 2005 (Subsidia Albertina, 1), pp. 249–280. For the chronology of Albert's works, H. Anzulewicz, *De forma resultante in speculo. Die theologische Relevanz des Bildbegriffs und des Spiegelmodells in den Frühwerken des Albertus Magnus*, Vol. I, Münster 1999 (Beiträge zur Geschichte des Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. Neue Folge, 53/1), pp. 12–17.

[2] On Albert's doctrine of the transcendentals, cf. H. Kühle, "Die Lehre Alberts des Grossen von den Transzendentalien", in: F.-J. von Rintelen (ed.), *Philosophia Perennis. Abhandlungen zu ihrer Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Festgabe Josef Geyser zum 60. Geburtstag), Vol. I, Regensburg 1930, pp. 131–147. J. A. Aertsen, "Die Frage nach dem Ersten und Grundlegenden. Albert der Große und die Lehre von den Transzendentalien", in: W. Senner (ed.), *Albertus Magnus. Zum Gedenken nach 800 Jahren: Neue Zugänge, Aspekte und Perspektiven*, Berlin 2001 (Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens, 10), pp. 91–112.

Aristotelian-Avicennian tradition of thought, defined his position in relation to Philip the Chancellor's first account, and adopted the theological function of the first concepts from the *Summa Halensis*.

5.1 The treatise *De bono*: Albert and Philip the Chancellor

1. Two early writings of Albert deal with the good, a constantly recurring topic in his works.[3] His first treatise known to us, which goes back to his activity as a teacher in Dominican study houses in Germany, is titled *De natura boni* (ca. 1236–1237). During his stay at the University of Paris in the 1240's he composed another treatise on the good: *De bono*. This work was part of Albert's first large project; it was the last in a series of six works that put together made up what has been called the Parisian *Summa de creaturis*. Thematically the two early writings agree in their focus on the doctrine of the virtues, but they approach this issue in different manners.[4]

The uncompleted work *De natura boni* starts with a quotation from Scripture (Luke 18,19): "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone". From this reply Albert derives that the good is twofold: what is good through itself and essentially good, which is God alone, and the created good. In the brief prologue, he indicates that this treatise will discuss the nature of the created good from an ethical perspective (*moraliter*).[5]

The work *De bono*, on the other hand, begins with an extensive account of the good "according to the common concept of 'good'" (*secundum communem intentionem boni*). This treatise is founded on a metaphysics of the good, as it appears from the contents of the first question, which is divided into four sections:

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[3] Cf. H. Anzulewicz, "*Bonum* als Sclüsselbegriff bei Albertus Magnus", in: W. Senner (ed.), *Albertus Magnus. Zum Gedenken nach 800 Jahren*, pp. 113–140.

[4] Contra: A. Tarabochia Canavero, *Alberto Magno, Il bene. Trattato sulla natura del bene. La fortezza, La prudenza, La giustizia* (intr., transl. and notes), Milano 1987, p. 11.

[5] Albert the Great, *De natura boni*, prol. (ed. E. Filthaut, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXV/1, Münster 1974, p. 1): "Huius igitur boni creati naturam in hoc tractatu cupimus magis moraliter quam substantialiter exsequi".

(i) *Quid sit bonum* (art. 1);
(ii) *De communitate intentionis boni* (art. 2–5);
(iii) *De comparatione boni ad ens*, which contains two questions:
"Is good convertible with being?" (art. 6), and
"Is every being good insofar as it is?" (art. 7)—the problem of Boethius's *De hebdomadibus*;
(iv) *De comparatione boni ad verum* (art. 8–10).[6]

The first *quaestio* in *De bono* is modelled on Philip the Chancellor's *Summa de bono* (ca. 1225–28), which contains the first account of a doctrine of the transcendentals. This dependency explains the absence of a treatment of "the one". In the eleven introductory questions of the *Summa*, Philip discusses two problems in particular: the relation of the good, which is the central notion in the beginning of the doctrine, to the other *communissima* and the question, how the commonness of the good is related to the good that is proper to God. In *De bono*, Albert treats the same issues in a somewhat different order. During his stay at Paris, the *civitas philosophorum*,[7] he had apparently become acquainted with Philip's *Summa* and decided to start his second treatise on the good with an account of the transcendental good.

2. Although the first question in *De bono* was deeply influenced by Philip, Albert's teaching also contains some new elements. A difference to Philip concerns the conceptual determinations of the transcendentals. Albert adopts The Chancellor's explanation of the twofold relation between the *communissima*. When "being", "one", "true", and "good" are considered according to their supposits, they are identical and convertible with one another. But they differ according to their concepts—that was the reason for Philip's preoccupation with the proper *ratio* or "definition" of the most common notions. Typical of his doctrine is that he prefers definitions of "the good" and "the true" in terms of "indivision". But it turns out that for Albert this model does not have the same force.

In q. 1, art. 1 (*quid sit bonum?*), Albert discusses three definitions or "descriptions" (*assignationes*) of the good. The first is Aristotle's definition

[6] Albert the Great, *De bono*, tract. I (ed. H. Kühle, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXVIII, Münster 1951, p. 1).
[7] Albert uses this phrase in *De natura loci*, tract. III, c. 2 (ed. P. Hossfield, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. V/2, Münster 1980, p. 34): "Parisius, quae est civitas philosophorum".

from the beginning of his *Ethics*, "the good is what all things seek"; the second is the definition in terms of indivision: "the good is the indivision of act from potency", a definition that Albert attributes to Avicenna, but later in the same art. to an anonymous author (Philip the Chancellor) who composed this phrase from passages in Avicenna and Aristotle; the third definition is a curious choice; it is derived from Algazel's *Metaphysics*, "the good is an act, the apprehension of which is accompanied by enjoyment". For all three definitions Albert adduces pro and contra arguments, concluding that "these three definitions are well proven, and the arguments proving them touch the essential features and nature of good".[8]

Albert does not show an explicit preference for one of these definitions, but his final evaluation of them suggests a preference for the definition of the "good" in terms of "indivision". The first definition, he establishes, is given through that which is ordered towards an end; the second is given concerning perfect good; and the third concerning the proper effect consequent upon good.[9]

But with respect to the question "What is truth?" (art. 8) Albert proceeds differently. He states that "the true" is defined by some people (*quibusdam*) as "the indivision of being and that which is", but Philip's favorite definition does not play any role in Albert's subsequent discussion of the concept of truth.[10] This shows that for him, just as for the *Summa Halensis*, "indivision" is no longer the exclusive viewpoint for the conceptual order of the transcendentals. This fact must have consequences for Albert's systematization of these notions, but in *De bono* he does not elaborate another ordering principle.

An innovation in *De bono* is Albert's understanding of the relation of "good" to "being". In q. 1, art. 6, in which he discusses their convertibility, he does not introduce, as one might expect, a twofold relation between good and being, but instead a threefold distinction: in one way

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[8] Albert the Great, *De bono*, tract. I, q. 1, a. 1, n. 7 (ed. Kühle, p. 4): "Solutio: Dicendum quod diffinitiones boni supra inductae bene probatae sunt et rationes probantes tangunt rationes et naturam boni, quam respiciunt diffinitiones".

[9] *Ibid.*, n. 10 ad ultimum (p. 7).

[10] *Ibid.*, a. 8, n. 27 (p. 15): "Ex usu autem loquendi (…) sic diffinitur a quibusdam verum, quod 'verum est indivisio esse et quod est'". For Albert's conception of truth, cf. W. Senner, "Zur Definition der Wahrheit bei Albertus Magnus", in: T. Eggensperger / U. Engel (eds.), *Wahrheit, Recherchen zwischen Hochscholastik und Postmoderne*, Mainz 1995 (Walberberger Studien. Philosophische Reihe, 9), pp. 11–48.

good is posterior to being, in a second way it is prior to being, and in a third way it is convertible with being.[11]

The firstness of "being" was a crucial presupposition in Philip the Chancellor's theory, and yet he does not elaborate upon it. Albert, however, presents arguments for the priority of being. "For the concept of being is the concept of the most simple which is not analyzable (*non est resolvere*) into anything which is conceptually prior to it. But good is analyzable into 'being related to an end'".[12] The concept of "good" is posterior to "being", since it is more complex and adds a relation to an end to it.

The priority of the good to being is a new element in the discussion about the relations among the transcendentals. The reason that Albert takes this priority into consideration is the authority of Dionysius the Areopagite, who regards "the Good" to be the primary divine name. We shall therefore return to this innovation in connection with Albert's third project: his commenting on the *corpus dionysiacum*.

3. The section in the first question of *De bono* that deals with the commonness of the concept "good", contains the question (art. 4): "Is the good said of the uncreated and created good according to a common concept?" In the second objection Albert advances an argument that is historically interesting, because it refers to the notion that was not yet named in Philip's treatment of the question (see ch. 3.3).

The objection claims that the commonness at issue cannot be that of a genus or a species, but must be a commonness "according to analogy" (*secundum analogiam*). This claim, however, appears untenable. The argument distinguishes three modes of analogy that, according to Albert's reading, were distinguished by Aristotle himself in book IV of the *Metaphysics*—the distinction is in fact based on the examples given there. The first mode of analogy is "according to the reference to the subject", the way in which "being" is said analogically in relation to substance, that is the subject of every being. The second mode is "through the relation to one act"; in this sense it is said of a doctor and of medical

[11] Albert the Great, *De bono*, tract. I, q. 1, a. 6, n. 21 (ed. Kühle, p. 11): "Dicendum, quod bonum uno modo est posterius ente et secundo modo est ante ipsum et tertio modo convertitur cum ipso".

[12] *Ibid.*: "Intentio enim entis est intentio simplicissimi, quod non est resolvere ad aliquid, quod sit ante ipsum secundum rationem. Bonum autem resolvere est in ens relatum ad finem".

instruments that they "heal". The third mode is "through the relation to one end"; in this way "healthy" is analogically said of an animal, a medicine, drink and urine.[13] In none of these three modes of analogy, the objection argues, the good is common to God and creatures. Not in the first way, because there is not one subject in which every good is and from which it has its goodness. Nor is it common in the second way, because the created and the uncreated good are not related to the same act; moreover, the first good is good by its substance and not only in relation to an act. Nor is the good common in the third way, because there is not one end of all that is good. Something is good in virtue of the indivision from the end that suits its nature, but things do not have the same end according to their natures.[14]

Albert's reply to this objection is at the same time his general reply to the question. The commonness of the good must be reduced to the third mode of analogy. Although there is not one end which every good attains as its inner completion, nevertheless there is one extrinsic end to which every created good is related, namely the highest good. All other things are good insofar as they are from and towards this good.[15]

As we noted in the second chapter (2.2), it has been suggested that the first medieval theory of analogy is found in Albert's commentary on *De praedicabilibus* (dating from ca. 1251/2), in which he refers to the *Arabes* in support of the view that terms like "being" are predicated "analogically", that is, according to priority and posteriority.[16] However, it is, evident that Albert—already before his Aristotle project—presents this idea in the context of the doctrine of the transcendentals in his early treatise *De bono*. What is, from a doctrinal point of view, noteworthy in this text is Albert's implicit criticism of Philip the Chancellor's interpretation of analogy. He rejects the example with which Philip had illustrated the commonness of the good. Philip understands the commonness of the good "according to priority and posteriority" in the manner in which "being" is said primarily of substance and secondarily

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[13] *Ibid.*, a. 4, n. 17 (p. 10).

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Ibid.*: "Dicendum, quod ibi est communitas proportionalitatis (…), quae reducitur ad tertium modum analogiae. Licet enim unus finis non sit, quem attingat omne bonum ut complementum suum, tamen unus finis est extra, ad quem se habet omne bonum creatum, inquantum potest. Et hic finis est summum bonum. Alia enim bona non sunt bona nisi ab illo et ad illud".

[16] Cf. A. de Libera, "Les sources gréco-arabes de la théorie médiévale de l'analogie de l'être", in: *Les Etudes philosophiques* 3–4 (1989), p. 330.

of the accident. Albert criticizes this application of the "transcendental" analogy to the "theological" level, since this mode of analogy presupposes a common subject and thus is not appropriate for expressing the relation between the created and uncreated good. This critical attitude towards analogy on the basis of a clear distinction of a *duplex analogia* recurs in Albert's later works.

5.2 Commentary on the *Sentences*: The 'philosophus' versus the 'sancti'

Albert's second project was his commentary on the *Sentences* (completed 1246–49), obligatory for every Bachelor of theology. His commentary on the first book, which is datable after *De bono*,[17] contains, in the context of a discussion of truth, an analysis of the order between the transcendentals *ens, unum, verum* and *bonum*. This account deserves our attention, since it manifests Albert's understanding of the foundations of the doctrine.[18]

The text begins with a reference to the view of the *philosophus* that "'being' and 'one' are before everything". This statement refers to Aristotle's exposition of the convertibility of "being" and "one" in book IV of the *Metaphysics*, which is the main historical source for the doctrine of the transcendentals. It is, however, striking that Albert immediately emphasizes the limitations of the Aristotelian view by claiming that "the Philosopher does not hold that 'true' and 'good' are dispositions concomitant (*generaliter concomitantes*) with every being".[19]

Albert also indicates the reason why Aristotle does not arrive upon the transcendentality of truth and goodness: "The Philosopher does not consider being insofar as it flows from the first, one, wise and good

[17] H. Pouillon, "La 'Summa de bono' et le commentaire des Sentences d'Albert le Grand", in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 8 (1936), pp. 203–206.

[18] Albert the Great, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 46, a. 14 (ed. Borgnet, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. 26, Paris 1893, p. 450). Cf. A. Tarabochia Canavero, "I *sancti* e la dottrina dei trascendentali nel Commento alle Sentenze di Alberto Magno", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, Berlin-New York 1998 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 26), pp. 515–521. C. Gabbani, "Le proprietà trascendentali dell'essere nel *Super Sententiarum* di Alberto Magno", in: *Medioevo. Rivista di storia della filosofia medievale* 28 (2003), pp. 97–138.

[19] Albert the Great, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 46, a. 14 (ed. Borgnet, Vol. 26, p. 450): "Dicendum quod secundum Philosophum, ante omnia sunt ens et unum. Philosophus enim non ponit, quod verum et bonum sint dispositiones generaliter concomitantes ens (…)".

being". He rather considers being "insofar as the intellect terminates in it by resolving (*resolvens*) the posterior into the prior and the composed into the simple". Aristotle did not determine the true and the good in relation to the first cause, but considered the good insofar as it is the end of motion.[20] This means that the Philosopher did not see the good as a general disposition of being, but as something belonging to the domain of physics.

Typical of Aristotle's approach is his use of the method of *resolutio*, the reduction of things by the intellect to a first concept, an analysis that comes to an end in "being". In his reading, Albert ascribes to "the Philosopher" a view that is rather proper to Avicenna's doctrine of the primary notions—the phrase "dispositions concomitant with every being" also points in that direction. The Arab philosopher does not list "true" and "good" among the "firsts", and Albert shows his awareness of this fact.

Over against the *philosophus*, Albert posits the *sancti*, who considered being insofar as it has "flowed" (*fluit*) from the first, true and good being. He uses the (Boethian) *fluxus* terminology that was also employed by Philip the Chancellor in his justification of the commonness of the good. The "saints" held that "being", "one", "true" and "good" are the first determinations (*prima*) and are in every thing. To their view, which leads to a "theological" foundation of the transcendentals, Albert himself subscribes.[21]

How is the opposition between the *philosophi*, the non-Christian thinkers, and the *sancti*, which is more than once found in Albert's works, to be understood in the present case? Marie-Dominique Chenu interpreted Albert's account of the transcendentals as an example of the notion of "Christian philosophy" that was introduced by Etienne Gilson as the characteristic of medieval thought. Under the influence of the idea of creation Christian thinkers transformed the depth structure

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[20] *Ibid.*: "Quia Philosophus non considerat ens secundum quod fluit ab ente primo et uno et sapiente et bono, sed ipse considerat ens secundum quod stat in ipso intellectus resolvens posterius in prius, et compositum in simplex (…): et ideo de vero et bono non determinat per hunc modum, sed de bono quod est finis ad quem est motus".

[21] *Ibid.*: "Et ideo sic generaliter considerando ista [ens, unum, verum, bonum], ut consideraverunt Sancti (…). Hoc autem ideo dico, quia ista a Sanctis prima ponuntur et in quolibet". The *fluxus* terminology is often used in the preceding question.

of metaphysics.[22] But this interpretation cannot be accepted without restrictions.

It is not the idea of transcendentality as such that is denied by "the Philosopher", but the transcendental character of the true and the good. Yet in a later work, Albert acknowledges that Aristotle was one of the few who held the transcendentality of the good. He observes that with the exception of Aristotle (in the first book of the *Ethics*, in which he criticizes Plato's Idea of the Good), the *philosophi* rarely speak about the good that "runs through all genera" (*circuit omnia genera*).[23] What we may conclude from Albert's opposition between the *philosophus* and the *sancti* in the *Sentences* commentary is that it shows his awareness for the fact that different traditions of thought influenced the genesis and development of the doctrine of the transcendentals: an Aristotelian-Avicennian reduction to primary concepts and a Christian-Neoplatonic reduction to the first cause.

The different traditions are reflected in Albert's further analysis of the order of the transcendentals. "Being" or "essence" is first by nature; it is the "substrate" for the other determinations. Next to "being" is "the one", because it only adds a privation to "being", namely "indivision". The "true" and the "good" add a relation to the first cause. *Verum* signifies the relation to the exemplary cause, by which it has the features of manifestation and intelligibility; *bonum* the relation to the extrinsic end, from and toward which a thing is.[24]

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[22] Cf. M.-D. Chenu, "Les 'philosophes' dans la philosophie chrétienne médiévale", in: *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 26 (1937), pp. 27–40, here in particular pp. 36–7.

[23] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, n. 6 ad 2 (ed. P. Simon, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXXVII/1, Münster 1972, p. 116): "Philosophi raro loquuntur de bono, quod circuit omnia genera, nisi Aristoteles in I Ethicorum"; *ibid*., c. 4, n. 3 ad 2 (*ibid*., p. 114): "Hoc intelligendum est de bono, quod est in genere, secundum quod est finis motus physici, sed non de bono, secundum quod circuit omnia genera, prout loquitur de bono Philosophus in principio Ethicorum".

[24] Albert the Great, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 46, a. 14 (ed. Borgnet, Vol. 26, p. 450): "(…) dicemus quod inter ista, scilicet essentia et ens, est primum natura, circa quod ut substratum sibi ponuntur alia: sed unitas et unum consequuntur essentiam per indivisionem; et ideo non ponit unitas aliquam dispositionem realem circa ipsum, sed tantum privationis intellectum, scilicet indivisionis, et ideo proximum est essentiae. Verum autem dicit relationem ad formam ad minus exemplarem, per quam habet rationem manifestationis (…). Bonitas autem et bonum dicunt respectum ad finem extra, a quo res est, et ad quem est".

Who counts among the *sancti*? In *De bono*, Albert lists Augustine, Bernhard of Clairvaux, and (pseudo-) Dionysius Areopagita.[25] It seems plausible that, when speaking of the opposition between the *philosophus* and the *sancti*, he particularly has Dionysius in mind. His third project was devoted to this authority.

5.3 The Dionysian tradition and the doctrine of the transcendentals

Albert's third project was the commenting on the complete *corpus dionysiacum*. He began this project in Paris and continued it, when in 1248 he—followed by his student Thomas Aquinas—returned to Cologne in order to establish the *studium generale* of the Dominicans in Germany. In the next year Albert lectured on *De divinis nominibus* of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.[26] Several aspects of this commentary are instructive for his further elaboration of the doctrine of the transcendentals: his understanding of the commonness of the good as "univocity of analogy", the effort to reconcile the Dionysian primacy of the "good" with the primacy of transcendental "being", and his two accounts of the transcendentals—Albert's most extensive treatment of the doctrine is to be found in this work.

5.3.1 *The commonness of the good*: Univocatio analogiae

1. Albert's commentary has the form of *quaestiones*. The first question he raises reads: "What is the *subiectum* of this book?" The title of Dionysius's work suggests, of course, "the divine names" as answer, but Albert advances several objections which make clear that he takes the term *subiectum* in the sense of "subject of science", as explained by Aristotle in his *Posterior Analytics* and elaborated by the medieval commentators in their discussions on the "subject matter" of metaphysics. The first objection argues that, according to the Philosopher, a science

[25] Albert the Great, *De bono*, tract. I, q. 2, n. 40 (ed. Kühle, p. 22); *ibid*.; a. 2, n. 45 (p. 25).

[26] On Albert's Commentary, cf. F. Ruello, *Les "noms divins" et leurs "raisons" selon Saint Albert le Grand, Commentateur du "De divinis nominibus"*, Paris 1963 (Bibliothèque Thomiste, 35); Id., "Le commentaire du Divinis Nominibus de Denys par Albert le Grand. Problèmes de méthode", in: *Archives de Philosophie* 43 (1980), pp. 589–613.

considers the subject and its parts. But Dionysius's book does not say anything about the "symbolic" names—that is, "the parts". Therefore the divine names are not the subject of this work. Moreover, as the Philosopher claims, there is "one science of one subject-genus". The multiplicity of names is incompatible with this principle.[27]

In his reply, Albert recognizes that not the divine names in general are the subject of Dionysius's book, for the Areopagite does not treat the "symbolic" names, but only the names that imply a causal relation to things. The proper subject, which constitutes the unity of *De divinis nominibus*, are those divine names "that make known the cause according to the attributes, insofar as the caused things participate in them when they proceed from God".[28] Albert's conclusion corresponds with the intention expressed by Dionysius himself. His aim is to elucidate the divine names that signify the causality of the first principle with respect to the creatures.[29] What is noteworthy, however, is Albert's qualification of the central notion of causality.

The science that Dionysius pursues in *De divinis nominibus* is a *scientia resolutoria*, since his method, Albert states, is the *modus resolutorius*. This "resolution" is not the reduction of "the Philosopher" to the first concepts of the intellect we discussed in the preceding section, but the reduction of the caused to the cause, "insofar as the cause produces the caused in a univocal way (*univoce*)".[30] Albert may have the Dionysian principle "All that is good proceeds from the first good" as a paradigm in mind. The properties of the cause, he notes, are said of the caused, not equivocally but univocally, yet he adds that this univocity is of a special kind, namely a "univocity of analogy" (*univocatio analogiae*).[31]

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[27] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 1, n. 2 (ed. Simon, pp. 1–2).

[28] *Ibid.*, n. 3 (p. 2): "Unde subiectum proprium istius libri est nomen divinum, quod facit notitiam causae secundum attributa, inquantum exeunt ab eo causata in participatione attributorum; et in hoc uniuntur omnia nomina de quibus hic agitur".

[29] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De divinis nominibus*, c. 2, n. 3 (ed. B. R. Suchla, in: *Corpus dionysiacum*, Vol. I, Berlin New York 1990 (Patristische Texte und Studien, 33), p. 125).

[30] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 1, n. 3 ad 6 (ed. Simon, p. 2): "Scientia ista resolutoria est, ducens ex causatis in causam"; *ibid.*, n. 4 (pp. 2–3): "Modus agendi in omnibus suis libris est resolutorius. (…) et hic est resolutorius, et talis est modus huius scientiae (…), secundum quod fit resolutio in causam, prout est univoce producens causatum".

[31] *Ibid.*, c. 1, n. 1 (p. 1): "De attributis enim causae sciendum, quod non aequivoce, sed univoce dicuntur de causatis, sed tali univocatione qualis potest esse ibi, quae est analogiae". Cf. A. de Libera, *Métaphysique et noétique: Albert le Grand*, pp. 122–127.

2. This combination of univocity and analogy seems odd at first sight, because in the thirteenth-century discussions of the conceptual unity of transcendental terms "analogy" was introduced as a new, third possibility besides univocity and equivocity. Albert's expression must be understood from the intermediate position he ascribes to what is analogical: it stands midway between univocal and equivocal. It can therefore be approached from two perspectives: from that of equivocity—this occurs in the commentaries on Aristotle on the basis of Boethius's differentiation of equivocals—, and from that of univocity—this occurs in the Dionysius commentary. "Univocity of analogy" reflects Albert's twofold interest: an analogy that is related to the exemplary cause and a univocity that is not that of a genus.

In his commentary on *De divinis nominibus*, Albert repeats his criticism of analogy that he had already articulated in *De bono*. The Dionysian method of resolution as the basis for his account of the divine names presupposes a certain conformity (*convenientia*) between God and creature, but Albert wonders what the nature of that *convenientia* could be. In a long objection he argues that all conformity occurs according to *aequivocatio, univocatio* or *analogia*. But none of these three possibilities seem to be under consideration, not even the last one. In the case of a *convenientia secundum analogiam* there is something that belongs to many things according to an order of prior and posterior and that itself is prior to them, as "being" is prior to substance and accident. Such an analogical conformity would thus imply that there is something prior to God and creature, but there is nothing prior to God.[32] In his reply, Albert acknowledges an analogical conformity between God and creature, but the only type of analogy that is acceptable at the "theological" level is the *convenientia exemplatorum ad exemplar*, the conformity of what is caused to the exemplar. In this mode of analogy, creatures participate in what is essentially in God according to their approximations to the exemplar.[33]

On the other hand, Albert wants to make clear that the formal causality of the exemplar does not have the univocity of a genus or species. In his discussion of the question "Whether all goods proceed from the first

[32] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 1, n. 56 (ed. Simon, p. 35).
[33] *Ibid.*, n. 57 (p. 35).

good?", he distinguishes two kinds of form, with which different kinds of commonness are connected. The first kind is the exemplary form, which is common, not by predication but by what proceeds from it, just as the form the shoemaker uses is common to all shoes. For that reason, it is not necessary that every thing participates in the form univocally, but according to its own possibility. The other form is common to many things by predication and is the form of a genus or species. From one such form a plurality comes forth in a univocal way. The procession of all good things from one form must not be understood in the latter manner but in the former. They proceed from one exemplar and do not necessarily belong to one species.[34]

Albert attempts to find a formal causality that is not categorical but does justice to the transcendental character of the good. But he advances an objection to his solution, which is derived from Aristotle's criticism of Plato's Form of the Good. "Against this the statement of the Philosopher, in the first book of the *Ethics* (c. 4), seems to be that there is not one exemplar of the Good for all goods". In his reply, Albert defends the Platonic-Dionysian concept of the Good against Aristotle by invoking the *Commentator*. The critical edition mistakenly suggests that reference is made to Averroes; in fact, Albert refers to the Byzantine scholar Eustratius of Nicea (ca. 1050–l120), whose commentary on the *Ethics* (as we have seen in the chapter on the reception of Aristotle: ch. 2.3.2) contains a critique of Aristotle's critique.

According to Eustratius, Aristotle misinterpreted Plato's Form of the Good. Its universality is that of a universal *ante rem* which "precontains" things and is the exemplary cause of them. Albert illustrates this causality with a typically medieval example, taken from the university praxis: a book that serves as an "exemplar" for the copyists. Likewise, the first good is the universal exemplar of all good things, which participate differently in it according to "the diversity of the recipients". In line with

[34] *Ibid.*, c. 2, n. 83 (p. 97): "Solutio: Dicimus, quod est duplex forma: quaedam exemplaris, et haec quidem communis est non per praedicationem, sed per processum ab ipsa exemplatorum, sicut forma calcificis omnibus calceis, et ideo non oportet, quod univoce participetur ab omnibus, sed ab unoquoque secundum suam possibilitatem, sicut supra dictum est de sigillo; est etiam quaedam forma communis pluribus per praedicationem, quae est forma generis vel speciei, et a tali una forma procedunt plura univoce. Dicimus ergo, quod processio est omnium bonorum ab uno formaliter, non sicut ab una forma generis vel speciei, sed sicut ab exemplari uno; et ideo non oportet, quod omnia sint bona unius speciei vel generis".

Dionysius's own "theological" conception of "analogy" (see ch. 2.5), the unity that is the result of the different "capacity" of creatures to participate in the one divine goodness can be called "analogical".[35]

5.3.2 *The primacy of the good*

One of Albert's main concerns in his commentary is the Dionysian order of the divine names. According to the Areopagite "the Good" is the primary name, prior even to "Being", since goodness is the real source of God's productive power. For that reason, he first deals with "the Good" (c. 4), and then with "Being" (c. 5). In several chapters of his commentary, Albert questions this order; his objections are based on the order of the transcendental names, in which not "good" but "being" is the first. Albert's *dubium* reads: Is it correct that "being" is discussed after the "good"?[36]

This doubt does not seem unreasonable, for that which is prior must be dealt with first. But "being" is the first conception of the intellect and is also ontologically prior to the good, because according to the fourth proposition from the *Liber De causis*, "the first of created things is being (*esse*)". Albert also refers to another proposition of this book, which claims that being alone is through creation (*creatio*), while the good and all other determinations are through "information" (*informatio*), that is through an addition to being.[37] The good therefore presupposes being.

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[35] *Ibid.*, n. 84 (pp. 97–98): "Unde Commentator (…) distinguit (…) universale, scilicet quod est ante rem, causa rei existens et praehabens rem (…). Et sic dicimus, quod liber, a quo multi exemplariter exeunt, est communis omnibus exemplatis, non ita, quod praedicetur de eis, nec ita, quod univoce participetur ab eis, sed secundum diversitatem pergameni et scriptoris scriptura in eis diversimode recipitur (…); sic enim dicimus quod primum bonum est exemplar universale omnium bonorum, non praedicatum de eis nec participatum ab eis univoce, sed secundum prius et posterius, secundum diversitatem recipientium". Cf. *ibid.*, c. 2, n. 84 ad 1 (p. 98): "(…) et ideo illud unum bonum a quo omnia procedunt, non est unum genere vel specie, sed secundum analogiam respectu omnium".

[36] For this *dubium*, cf. *ibid.*, c. 3, n. 2 (ed. Simon, p. 101); c. 4, n. 2 (p. 113); c. 5, n. 2 (p. 303); c. 13, n. 28 (pp. 448–9). Cf. A. de Libera, "L'Être et le Bien: Ex. 3, 14 dans la théologie rhénane", in: A. de Libera / E. Zum Brunn (eds.): *Celui qui est. Interprétations juives et chrétiennes d'Exode 3,14*, Paris 1986, pp. 127–162.

[37] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 3, n. 2 (ed. Simon, p. 101); *ibid.*, c. 4, n. 4 (p. 115): "Omne quod est per informationem habet se ex additione ad id quod informatur per ipsum; sed bonum, sicut dicitur in commento Libri De causis, est per informationem non nisi entis, quod dicitur esse per creationem;

Albert attempts to justify the Dionysian position of the primacy of the good by introducing a third moment into the relation between the transcendentals "being" and "the good". Philip the Chancellor had established that they are identical according to their supposits, but that "being" is conceptually prior to "the good". Albert's innovation, which he had already elaborated in *De bono* (q. 1, a. 6), consists in a further differentiation that is related to causality and implies the priority of the good. When the good and being are considered with reference to the cause in act, the good is prior, because goodness is the immediate reason of the action of the first cause.[38]

Albert advances two general considerations for the firstness of the good. One is Dionysius's view that the causality of the good is more universal than that of being. The causality of the good extends to being as well as to non-being, the causality of being only to that which is. That which does not exist is called into being by the good. Albert points to an etymology that he ascribes to the *Commentator* (in this case, Maximus Confessor), according to which *bonum* is derived from the Greek verb *boo, boas*, i. e. "I call". God is aptly named "good" because he calls everything into being from nothing.[39] The other consideration for the primacy of the good is based on the Aristotelian doctrine of the causes. The good signifies the end, and the end is the cause of causes because it is the cause of the causality of the efficient, formal and material cause. Therefore, the good is prior to being.[40] The causal perspective determines Dionysius's order of the divine names. From this viewpoint "the good" is the primary name and hence the Areopagite first deals with the good. His intention is to explain the

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ergo bonum addit aliquid supra ens"; *ibid*., c. 5, n. 20 (p. 314). Cf. *Liber de Causis*, prop. XVII (XVIII) (ed. A. Pattin, in: "Le Liber de Causis. Édition établie à l'aide de 90 manuscrits", in: *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 28/1 (1966), p. 86): "Redeamus autem et dicamus quod ens primum est (…) causa causarum, et, si ipsum dat omnibus rebus ens, tunc ipsum dat eis per modum creationis. Vita autem prima dat eis quae sunt sub ea vitam non per modum creationis immo per modum formae". For the *Liber de Causis*, see 5.4.2.

[38] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 3, n. 2 (ed. Simon, p. 102); c. 4, n. 3 (p. 114); c. 5, n. 2 (pp. 303–4).

[39] *Ibid*., c. 4, n. 3 (p. 114); c. 13, n. 28 (p. 448, 76–81). Cf. *De bono*, I, q. 1, a. 6, n. 21 (ed. Kühle, p. 12). On the *Commentator*, cf. H.-F. Dondaine, *Le corpus dionysien de l'université de Paris au XIII^e siècle*, Rome 1953 (Storia e Letteratura. Raccolta di Studi e Testi, 44), pp. 84–89.

[40] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 13, n. 28 (ed. Simon, p. 449).

names attributed to God on the basis of what proceeds from him.[41] In this way Albert attempts to connect the Platonic-Dionysian tradition with the doctrine of the transcendentals.

5.3.3 *Albert's accounts of the transcendentals*

First account

In his commentary, Albert offers a systematization of the transcendentals twice. The first is in chapter four, in the context of the question "How is 'good' related to 'being'?".[42] "Some people" (*quidam*) hold that the good adds some form to being. "We say, however, that 'good' adds no reality (*res*) to 'being' (*ens*)", and the same holds for truth and unity. They only add a mode of signifying (*modus significandi*), which is twofold, one based on negation, the other on affirmation. The mode of signifying based on negation does not posit anything in reality but only in concept (*in ratione*), for negation belongs to reason, not to nature. "One" adds this mode to "being", for "one" signifies being undivided in itself and divided from others. The other mode of signifying can be divided into two modes: (a) one is based on absolute affirmation and posits something in reality; "white", for instance, adds to "man" a mode of signifying and a reality. (b) The other mode is based on affirmation relative to something extrinsic and is again subdivided into two types of relations: real relations (b1) and conceptual relations (b2), which do not come to a thing as a result of a change in the thing itself but rather from the change in something else. Albert argues for the necessity of such conceptual relations on the grounds that, if such relations were real, the first principle would be most composed, since it has relations to all things. "True" and "good" add to "being" a mode of signifying based on such conceptual relations, for something is called "true" in virtue of a relation to the exemplary Idea,

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[41] *Ibid.*, c. 3, n. 2 (p. 102): "Et secundum hanc considerationem dicit Dionysius, quod primo debet determinari de bono, cum intendat exponere divina nomina, quibus nominatur deus per processiones ipsius, secundum quod est in causa actu"; *ibid.*, c. 4, n. 3 (p. 114).

[42] *Ibid.*, c. 4, n. 5 (p. 116). Cf. S. MacDonald, "The Metaphysics of Goodness and the Doctrine of the Transcendentals", in: S. MacDonald (ed.), *Being and Goodness. The Concept of the Good in Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1991, pp. 31–55. See the critical remarks in J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, pp. 62–68.

and "good" in virtue of a relation to the efficient cause moved by its goodness as the end.[43]

In closing, Albert recapitulates the results of his analysis. The "entity" (*entitas*) of a thing is called that through which a thing has being (*esse*); it is the first conception of the intellect. "Unity" is the same essence or form to which the mode of indivisibility is added. The same form is the "truth" of the subject in virtue of the relation to the first Idea which it imitates; it is the "goodness" of the subject in virtue of the relation to the first efficient and final cause. Albert substantiates the correctness of his view by pointing out the absurdity of the opposite position concerning the problem of addition. If the essence were good or one, not through the same form but in virtue of some added form, then again that added form would be good or one, not through itself but in virtue of another form, and an infinite regress would arise. Consequently, the first essence would not be wholly good or one.[44] Goodness and unity would lose their transcendental character.

Albert's exposition confirms what we already observed in *De bono* and in his commentary on the *Sentences*. In contrast to Philip the Chancellor, the notion of "indivision" is no longer the exclusive model for the determination of the other transcendentals for him. Only "the one" adds a negation to "being". Albert understands "the true" and "the good" as relational transcendentals; they add something positive to "being", namely a relation to something extrinsic.

His argument for the merely conceptual character of these relations is, however, problematic. The relation that "the true" and "the good" add to "being" cannot be a real relation, otherwise the first principle would be most composed, since it is related to all things. But this

[43] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, n. 5 (ed. Simon, p. 116). Note in particular: "Sunt autem quaedam relationes quae non innascuntur ex mutatione rei, sed potius ex mutatione alterius (…); et tales relationes sunt potius rationes quam res. Alias oporteret, quod primum esset maxime compositum, quia habet plurimas relationes, ad omnia scilicet, secunda vero ad quaedam tantum. Et modum fundatum super tales relationes addit verum et bonum supra ens. Dicitur enim verum secundum respectum ad ideam, bonum vero secundum respectum ad efficientem motum sua bonitate tamquam fine".

[44] *Ibid.*: "Unde dicimus, quod entitas rei dicitur, secundum quod in se consideratur res per eam esse habens, prout est prima conceptio intellectus. Unitas vero est eadem essentia sive forma cum modo indivisibilitatis, et eadem est veritas subiecti relatione ad ideam primam, quam imitatur, et bonitas subiecti relatione ad primum efficiens finale. Si enim essentia esset bona vel una per aliquam formam additam, tunc iterum illa esset per aliam, et sic in infinitum iretur, et prima res non tota esset bona vel una".

consideration is beside the point. At issue is not the relation of the first cause to all other beings, but the reverse relation. According to Albert himself "the good that is convertible with being is said of something because this is from the good".[45] This relation is a real relation, a relation of dependency, not a merely conceptual relation.

Second account

The problematic aspect of Albert's systematization of the transcendentals comes even more clearly to the fore in his second account in his commentary on *De divinis nominibus*. In chapter 5, he discusses the question whether "being" (*ens* or *esse*) is "the first" (*primum*) among all things. He advances several arguments suggesting that this is not the case: "one", "true" and "good" are not subsequent to "being" but convertible with it.

In his reply, Albert first establishes that "being" is prior to all other things according to nature and reason. It is the first conception of the intellect and "that in which the analyzing intellect (*intellectus resolvens*) comes to a stand", when it reduces a thing to its most universal predicate. Furthermore, "being" alone is produced by creation and does not presuppose something else.[46] But how are the other transcendentals related to "being"? Albert seeks an answer by distinguishing three possible ways of convertibility.

(i) The first way is according to the supposit (*suppositum*), the nature (*naturam*) and the mode (*modum*). This type of convertibility applies to synonyms. Albert gives the example of *mucro* and *ensis*, two Latin terms for "sword"; it is tacitly assumed that this type cannot be applied to the transcendentals, since these terms are marked by identity and difference.

(ii) The second way of convertibility is according to the supposit, but not according to the nature. This type applies to the convertibility of "being" with "true" and "good". "Good" and "true" are predicated of everything of which "being" is predicated, and conversely. But

[45] *Ibid.*: "Est enim bonum semper secundum respectum ad finem secundum aliquem modum, vel prout est in efficiente; et sic dicitur bonum, quod convertitur cum ente, quia est a bono".

[46] *Ibid.*, c. 5, n. 20 (p. 314): "Dicendum, quod esse simpliciter secundum naturam et rationem est prius omnibus aliis; est enim prima conceptio intellectus et in quo intellectus resolvens ultimo stat. Ipsum etiam solum per creationem producitur non praesupposito alio, omnia autem alia per informationem, scilicet supra ens praeexistens".

they add a positive mode to "being", namely, a relation, for "being" is called "created" in relation to the uncreated being of which it is a likeness. "True" adds a relation to the Idea, insofar as it is the principle of knowing; "good" adds a relation to the end. Thus they add a nature to "being", are subsequent to "being" and not convertible with it according to their natures.[47]

(iii) The third way is according to the supposit and to the nature, but not according to the mode. This type applies to the convertibility of "being" with "one". "One" adds to "being" the notion of "indivision". What is added is not a nature, but a mode that consists in a negation. The order of "being" to "one" is based on the twofold act of the form. The first act is that the form gives being (*dat esse*), by which it effects that something is a "being" (*ens*). The second act is that the form determines (*terminat*) the potentiality of matter, by which it effects that something is undivided, that is, "one". Since the bestowing of being is the principal act of the form and precedes the determining function, "being" is prior to "one".[48] The ontological foundation of the order between "being" and "one" on the twofold act of the form is an original feature of Albert's doctrine.

A noteworthy aspect of this second account is the imbalance between the foundations of the convertibility of "being" with "one", on the one hand, and that of "being" with "true" and "good", on the other. The former is ontological, based on the dual act of the form, while the latter is theological, based on the creative causality of the first being. In this account, the additions of "true" and "good" to "being" are no

[47] *Ibid.*: "quaedam vero [convertuntur] secundum suppositum, sed non secundum naturam, sicut ens cum vero et bono, quia de quibuscumque praedicatur ens, praedicatur bonum et verum et e converso. Sed tamen bonum et verum addunt modum quendam, qui consistit in affirmatione, supra ens, scilicet respectum quendam; dicitur enim creatum tantum per respectum ad ens increatum sicut similitudo ipsius, verum autem addit respectum ad ideam, secundum quod est principium cognoscendi, bonum autem addit respectum ad finem, et ideo addunt naturam quandam supra ens, unde sunt posteriora ipso et non convertuntur cum eo secundum naturam".

[48] *Ibid.*: "Quaedam vero convertuntur secundum suppositum et secundum naturam, sed non secundum modum, sicut unum et ens, quia de quibuscumque dicitur unum et ens et e converso, tamen unum addit modum quendam supra ens. (…) Modus tamen, quem addit, non consistit in affirmatione, sed tantum in negatione (…). Et ideo nullam naturam addit supra ens, sed tamen ratione illius modi est posterius ente. Quod sic patet: forma enim et est forma et est terminus potentialitatis materiae, et inquantum quidem est forma, dat esse, inquantum vero est terminus, terminat distinguendo ab aliis. Horum autem actuum prior est dare esse, et ideo ens quod relinquitur ex tali actu, est prius uno". Cf. *ibid.*, c. 13, n. 7 (p. 436).

longer described as merely conceptual relations. They add a *natura*, but Albert does not make clear how such a real addition is compatible with the transcendentality of the true and the good. His two systematizations show that the problem of the addition has become acute with regard to the true and the good, after he had abandoned Philip the Chancellor's model of "indivision". "True" and "good" add something *positive*, but how is this positive addition to be understood?

5.4 Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and the *transcendentia*

In his teaching at the *studium generale* in Cologne, Albert made an unusual decision for a master in theology: 1250 he lectured on the main work of Greek moral philosophy, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, of which the complete text had been translated into Latin by Robert Grosseteste only three years before. The reason could be that Albert, in his commentary on *De divinis nominibus*, had to deal with the Aristotelian criticism of Plato's Idea of the Good. His lectures on the *Ethics* were the beginning of a huge project: the commenting on the entire *Corpus aristotelicum* with the intention "to make all the parts of philosophy intelligible (*intelligibiles*) to the Latins".[49] Albert played a central role in the thirteenth-century reception of Aristotle; he composed no less than 36 commentaries. In his logical commentaries he expressed, as we have seen (c. 2.2: "Change of perspective in the thirteenth century"), the limits of the categorial order. Instructive for the metaphysical elaboration of the transcendental way of thought and Albert's understanding of First Philosophy is his commentary on the *Metaphysics* (written around 1264).

5.4.1 *The disputation on the "subject" of metaphysics*

Albert's commentaries offer not only a paraphrase and explanation of the Aristotelian texts, but also contain what he calls "digressions" (*digressiones*), intended for solving problems and filling doctrinal gaps.[50]

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[49] Albert the Great, *Physica*, I, tract. 1, c. 1 (ed. P. Hossfeld, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. IV/1, Münster 1987, p. 1): "nostra intentio est omnes dictas partes facere Latinis intelligibiles".

[50] *Ibid.*: "Et praeter hoc digressiones faciemus declarantes dubia suborientia et supplentes, quaecumque minus dicta in sententia Philosophi obscuritatem quibusdam attulerunt".

In the first treatise of his *Metaphysics* commentary, Albert makes such a digression in order to explain what "the proper subject" (*proprium subiectum*) of this science is. A preliminary account, he observes, is necessary because of the diversity of opinions among the philosophers.[51] His model evidently is Avicenna's inquiry into the subject of First Philosophy (see ch. 2.4.1), although this name is not mentioned. Albert's commentary shows how heavily the medieval reading of the Philosopher relies on the Arab philosopher's interpretation and how "basic" the question as to the subject of metaphysics is for the Latin commentators.

Albert lists three different positions on this issue. Some philosophers claimed that the first causes are the proper subject of metaphysics, because science is knowledge of the causes and First Philosophy traces reality back to first or ultimate causes. Others held that God and the divine things (*deus et divina*) are the subject. Both groups of philosophers agreed that "being" (*ens*) is not a suitable candidate.[52] The third position is not presented in itself, but only through objections against a science of being. If being as being were the subject of metaphysics, nothing different from the subject could be demonstrated, since nothing is different from being (*nihil est diversum ab ente*). Moreover, if being were the subject, this science would cover all that is and render the other sciences superfluous.[53]

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[51] Albert the Great, *Metaphysica*, I, tract. 1, c. 2 (ed. B. Geyer, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XVI/1, Münster 1960, p. 3): "Et est digressio declarans, quid sit huius scientiae proprium subiectum; et est in eo disputatio de tribus opinionibus philosophorum, quae sunt de subiecto". On the question as to the subject of metaphysics in Albert, cf. A. Zimmermann, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik? Die Diskussion über den Gegenstand der Metaphysik im 13. Und 14. Jahrhundert. Texte und Untersuchungen*, Leuven 1998 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales. Bibliotheca, 1), pp. 186–198; T. B. Noone, "Albert the Great on the Subject of Metaphysics and Demonstrating the Existence of God", in: *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 2 (1992), pp. 31–52; id., "Albert the Great's Conception of Metaphysical Knowledge", in: L. Honnefelder / R. Wood / M. Dreyer / M.-A. Aris (eds.), *Albertus Magnus und die Anfänge der Aristoteles-Rezeption im lateinischen Mittelalter. Von Richardus Rufus bis zu Franciscus de Mayronis*, Münster 2005 (Subsidia Albertina, 1), pp. 685–704.

[52] Albert the Great, *Metaphysica*, I, tract. 1, c. 2 (ed. Geyer, pp. 3–4): "Nonnulli enim fuerunt, qui posuerunt causam in eo quod causa est prima in unoquoque genere causarum, esse subiectum huius scientiae, ratione ista utentes, quod ista scientia considerat de causis ultimis, ad quas resolvuntur omnes causae (…). Ideo fuerunt alii qui dixerunt deum et divina subiectum esse scientiae istius (…). Amplius, tam hi quam primo inducti philosophi ratiocinantur ens non posse subiectum huius scientiae".

[53] *Ibid.* (p. 4): "(…) eo quod subiectum scientiae est, de quo aliquid diversum ab ipso potest demonstrari; nihil autem est diversum ab ente; propter quod nihil dicunt de ipso esse demonstrabile ei ideo subiectum esse non posse. Amplius, si ens, ut inquiunt, esset subiectum (…), certificaret ista scientia omnia quae sunt, et principia omnium. Et tunc omnes aliae scientiae superfluerent".

In the manner of a disputation Albert advances arguments pro and contra the three views. In this discussion a difference with Avicenna is noticeable that concerns the second candidate. While in Avicenna's *Metaphysics* this is briefly indicated as "the exalted God", the theological conception receives a more elaborate explanation in Albert. A remarkable feature of the argument is that not the divine as such is regarded as possible subject, but rather that which proceeds from the First Principle. All things can be considered in two ways: as composed and as simple (*simplex*). They are composed insofar as they are determined by quantity, like the mathematical objects, or by quantity and changeability, like the physical objects; they are simple insofar as they are the first caused and "the divine outpourings" (*effluxiones*) or "the divine processions" (*processiones divinae*), an expression for which Albert refers to Dionysius the Areopagite. These processions, as the "first *esse*", the "first *vivere*" or the "first *intelligere*"—the Neo-Platonic triad of perfections—, are the first foundations of all things determined by quantity and changeability. Because "this science deals with the first foundations (*prima fundamenta*) of all beings", the divine processions are considered to be the subject of metaphysics.[54] In this way, Albert draws Neo-Platonism into the discussion.

In his solution of the question Albert proceeds strictly formal. He rejects the first and second position, because they do not meet the formal conditions of a "subject". *Subiectum* of a science is that to which—as the common predicate (*praedicatum commune*)—the parts of that science are reduced and upon which the properties demonstrated in that science are consequent. Neither the first causes nor the divine things, however, are the common predicate of what is studied in metaphysics. Moreover, God is what is sought (*quaesitum*) in First Philosophy and cannot therefore be the subject, since—Albert even adopts the terminology of *Avicenna latinus*—no selfsame thing is both *subiectum* and *quaesitum* in a science.[55] From this conclusion follows that only being as being (*ens*

[54] *Ibid.* (pp. 3–4).

[55] *Ibid.* (p. 3, ll. 62–80 and p. 4): "Quod autem erronea sit haec opinio, constat per hoc quod nihil idem quaesitum est et subiectum in scientia aliqua; deus autem et divina separata quaeruntur in scientia ista; subiecta igitur esse non possunt. Amplius, partes, de quibus multa demonstrantur in scientia hac, non reducuntur ad deum sicut ad commune praedicatum de ipsis, sive communitas generis sive analogiae accipiatur. Adhuc passiones in hac scientia consideratae (…) non consequuntur immediate deum et divina; igitur subiectum non potest deus huius esse scientiae".

inquantum ens) can be the subject.[56] But Albert also provides an interesting, positive reason for the ontological conception of metaphysics.

This science is called "First" philosophy, since it deals with something that is first. The question is thus, why and in what sense "being" is the first and not, as one would expect, God or the first causes. Albert's argument for the primacy of being is ontological: *ens* is the first foundation (*primum fundamentum*) of all things and is itself not founded in something prior.[57] For this reason Albert also dismisses the view that the Dionysian "divine processions" are a candidate for the subject of First Philosophy. These processions are first, not because they are divine, but because they are related to the simplicity of being.[58]

Albert rejects the two objections advanced against the possibility of a science of being. The claim that in a science of which "being" is the subject nothing can be demonstrated, since nothing is different from being, is false. Although nothing has a real diversity from being, yet that which is consequent upon being shows some mode of addition (*modum additionis*) to being, and this kind of diversity suffices.[59] In his reply to the objection that "being" cannot be the subject of metaphysics, since a science of being makes the other sciences superfluous, Albert emphasizes that when the *prima* and *transcendentia* are known, for that reason a (particular) science is not yet known.[60]

The phrase Albert is using here summarizes the outcome of his disputation in a striking way. Metaphysical knowledge is concerned with the "firsts" and "transcendentals". This specification of the "firsts" furnishes a clear insight into Albert's understanding of First Philosophy. He was the first to connect the doctrine of the transcendentals with the ontological interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. His commentary shows

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[56] *Ibid.*: "Ideo cum omnibus Peripateticis vera dicentibus dicendum videtur, quod ens est subiectum inquantum ens".

[57] *Ibid.*: "Cum enim sit prima ista inter omnes scientia, oportet, quod ipsa sit de primo, hoc autem est ens (…), oportet, quod omnium principia per istam scientiam stabiliantur per hoc quod ipsa est de ente, quod est primum omnium fundamentum in nullo penitus ante se fundatum".

[58] *Ibid.* (p. 4, ll. 83–85).

[59] *Ibid.* (pp. 4–5): "Quod autem nihil de ente dicunt demonstrari posse diversum, etiam falsum est (…). Licet enim nihil ad ens habeat realem diversitatem, habent tamen omnia consequentia ad ens modum quendam additionis ad ipsum, et per hunc modum diversitatis, qui sufficit ad hoc quod inesse monstretur alicui sicut subiecto sibi, haec quae dicuntur passiones entis, enti inesse probantur".

[60] *Ibid.* (p. 5): "Nec aliae scientiae superfluunt (…), quia primis et transcendentibus scitis non propter hoc scitur scientia vel ars".

the medieval transformation of the conception of metaphysics: as the science of being it acquires a transcendental character.

5.4.2 *The primacy of being: "the first that is created"* (Liber De causis)

1. The characteristics of Albert's concept of what is first and transcendental can be determined more precisely. In his commentary on book IV of the *Metaphysics*, he again discusses the question as to the "subject" of First Philosophy. He interprets this notion in a more ontological sense than Avicenna did: *Subiectum* is that which is presupposed in all subsequent things and underlies all of them. Only "being" can therefore be the subject of metaphysics, because being has absolutely nothing prior to it, whereas all else presupposes being. Albert underlines the "foundational" aspect of being through a distinction derived from the *Liber De causis* that he had also used in his commentary on *De divinis nominibus*, the opposition between "creation" (*creatio*) and "information" (*informatio*). Being is solely through creation, which does not presuppose anything, since it is from "nothing"; all else, for instance, the good, is through information, that is, through an addition to being. In support of this view, Albert quotes the fourth proposition from the *Liber De causis*: "The first of created things is *esse* and there is no other created thing before it".[61] Remarkable in this argument is that the firstness of being is identified with the *primum creatum* and that the *Liber De causis* is drawn into the discussion on the subject of First Philosophy. Both elements deserve further attention.

2. The connection of the *Liber De causis*, an anonymous work that consists of 31 propositions with comments and was translated from the Arabic into Latin at the end of the twelfth century, and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was nothing new in itself. The "Book of Causes" was part of the curriculum of the Parisian Arts Faculty around 1250; it was the

[61] *Ibid.*, IV, tract. 1, c. 2 (p. 163): "[Ens] dicitur subiectum sicut id quod praesupponitur in omnibus sequentibus et omnibus substat eis. (…) Sic enim omnia sequentia enti demonstrantur inesse, ut entia per informationem esse habentia insunt enti per creationem solam esse habenti, eo quod nihil penitus ante se habeat, reliqua autem ad minus sibi praesupponunt ipsum ens. Sic enim intelligitur, quod in Libro De causis dicitur, quod 'prima rerum creatarum est esse, et non est ante ipsum creatum aliud'. Omnia autem alia sunt per informationem, ut bonum et omnia alia".

textbook for what the *Student's Guide* calls the final part of the science of metaphysics, dealing with the "divine substances, insofar as they are principles of being".[62] The Parisian masters completely ignored the Neo-Platonic background of this book and regarded it as the completion of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. This fact strengthened the "theological" conception of First Philosophy that was characteristic for the understanding of metaphysics in the first half of the thirteenth century.

Albert included the *Liber De causis* in his Aristotle project, because he considered it a Peripatetic work. In his commentary he explains its intention: the Jew Avendauth (David Iudaeus) had gathered a number of propositions that explicate how the primary causes have an influence upon the being of all things from statements by Aristotle and Arab philosophers. The *Liber De Causis* gives, according to Albert, the ultimate perfection to the *Metaphysics*, since it deals with the immaterial substances that Aristotle had only incompletely discussed in book XII.[63] In fact, however, the *Liber* is, as Thomas Aquinas discovered, an "excerpt" from the *Elementatio theologica* of Proclus, composed by an anonymous Arab author. Albert thus sees a Neoplatonic work as the completion of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. What effects did this view have on his ontological conception of First Philosophy?

Alain de Libera maintains the position that for Albert Aristotle's First Philosophy is divisible into two parts. The first (Aristotelian) part, handed down in the *Metaphysics*, is an ontology: its subject-matter is being as being. The second (Neoplatonic) part, handed down in the *Liber De causis*, is a theology: its subject-matter is the divine. In Albert we find a double reading of Aristotle, an ontological one, directed at formal being and the process of "information", and a theological one,

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[62] C. Lafleur (ed.), *Le "Guide de l'étudiant" d'un maître anonyme de la faculté des arts de Paris au XIII^e siècle*, § 10, Québec 1992 (Publications du Laboratoire de Philosophie Ancienne et Médiévale de la Faculté de Philosophie de l'Université de Laval, 1), p. 33. On the reception of the *Liber de Causis* in the Latin world, cf. C. d'Ancona Costa, *Recherches sur le Liber de Causis*, Paris 1995 (Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale, 72).

[63] The second book of Albert's work *De causis et processu universitatis a prima causa* is a commentary on *De causis*; cf. II, tract. 1, c. 1 (ed. W. Fauser, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XVII/2, Münster 1993, pp. 59–60): "(…) determinatur hic de separatis substantiis secundum plenam veritatem, de quibus in XII et XIII Metaphysicae non nisi secundum opinionem determinavit Aristoteles. Propter quod et iste liber Philosophiae primae coniungendus est, ut finalem ex isto recipiat perfectionem".

directed at causal being and creation.[64] The "onto-theological constitution" that, according to Heidegger, underlies Western metaphysics in a hidden way, seems to become manifest in the case of Albert. His metaphysics is twofold, a duality that corresponds to two different traditions.

This interpretation does not, however, capture the unity of Albert's concept of metaphysics. In his view, First Philosophy does not have two different "subjects"; the image of a dual reading of Aristotle is too rough. A clear proof of this is, as we have seen, that Albert, in his *Metaphysics* commentary already, draws the fourth proposition from *De causis* into the discussion on the subject of First Philosophy and integrates it into his own conception. Characteristic of Albert's position is that it conceives "being as being", the subject of metaphysics, as *created*. This is also evident from the summary of his view in the introductory chapter of his *Metaphysics* commentary. This science considers being (*esse*) "not insofar as it is limited (*contractum*) to this thing or that, but insofar as it is the first outpouring (*effluxio*) of God and the first created thing prior to which nothing else has been created".[65] First Philosophy is first, because it is directed to what is first created, i.e. "being". In this way, Albert solves the Avicennian problem of the relation of God to the subject of metaphysics. God does not fall under the subject, but rather is its cause.

3. An objection, however, can be leveled against this conception of metaphysics. Does not being as being, if it is conceived as created, lose its transcendental character and does not metaphysics consequently become the science of finite being?[66] Important for the clarification of Albert's form of transcendental thought are his reflections on the proposition "The first of created things is *esse*" in his commentary on *De causis*.[67]

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[64] A. de Libera, *Albert le Grand et la philosophie*, Paris 1990, pp. 51–54. Also in id., *Métaphysique et noétique: Albert le Grand*, Paris 2005, pp. 69–74.

[65] Albert the Great, *Metaphysica*, I, tract. 1, c. 1 (ed. Geyer, p. 3): "Esse enim, quod haec scientia considerat, non accipitur contractum ad hoc vel illud, sed potius prout est prima effluxio dei et creatum primum, ante quod non est creatum aliud".

[66] This objection has been advanced by B. Thomassen, *Metaphysik als Lebensform. Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung der Metaphysik im Metaphysikkommentar Alberts des Großen*, Münster 1985 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. Neue Folge, 27), pp. 72–75.

[67] Cf. L. Sweeney, "'*Esse primum creatum*' in Albert the Great's *Liber de causis et processu universitatis*", in: *The Thomist* 44 (1980), pp. 599–646.

Esse, Albert explains, has a cognitive priority, as it appears from the analysis (*resolutio*) of our concepts. If the composed is resolved into the prior or the particular into the universal, the *resolutio* will always stop at "being". Whatever is the last in a resolution, is necessarily the first in the process of composition. Hence *esse* is the first in all that proceeds from the First Principle.[68]

But is being really a first? What is first does not have anything before it, but being presupposes something, namely the First Cause. In his reply to this objection, Albert points out that the firstness of being has to be understood in the sense that it does not presuppose anything of itself (*nihil sui*), that is, with respect to its essential and intrinsic determinations. To be sure, created being presupposes the Creator, but the Creator does not belong to the being of things. Therefore, the reduction (*resolutio*) of things concerning their *essentialia* does not go back to the First Principle.[69]

Esse in the sense of *primum creatum* has a more extensive universality than anything else. Since "being" cannot be determined or specified by any difference, the scope of its predication is unlimited. Albert underlines that the generalness of being is different from that of the five traditional universals: *genus, species, differentia, proprium* and *accidens*. The universality of being "transcends" the genera, since it is that of a principle which enters into the existence of all things.[70]

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[68] Albert the Great, *De causis et processu universitatis*, II, tract. 1, c. 17 (ed. Fauser, p. 81): "Esse vero nihil habet ante se secundum intellectum. Si enim fiat resolutio compositi in simplex sive causati in causam secundum ordinem formalium causarum sive etiam posterioris in prius secundum naturam et intellectum sive tandem particularis in universale, semper stabit in ente resolutio. Quod autem ultimum est in resolutione, primum necesse est esse secundum viam compositionis. Esse igitur primum est in omnibus illis quae procedunt a primo. Haec enim secundum viam compositionis procedunt a ipso. Res enim omnes compositione constituuntur in esse".

[69] *Ibid.*: "Cum enim dicitur, quod primum nihil supponit ante se, intelligitur, quod nihil sui supponit ante se, hoc est, de essentiantibus et intrinsece constituentibus ipsum. Et sic esse primum est, quod nihil ante se supponit. Quia tamen est processus sive effluxus a primo, necesse est, quod supponat ante se creatorem. Sed ille nihil sui est. Primum enim principium non ingreditur essentialiter constitutionem rei alicuius. Propter quod resolutio entium non devenit usque ad primum principium, quando in essentialia fit resolutio".

[70] *Ibid.*, c. 18 (p. 83): "Latissima enim praedicatio est, quae est in omnibus. Esse autem primum creatum nulla differentia determinatum est. Ambitus ergo suae praedicationis a nullo restrictus est. Sequitur ergo, quod latissimae universalitatis est, quamvis universalitas sua non sit generis vel differentiae vel speciei vel proprii vel accidentis, sed principii primi ingredientis in esse rerum omnium, quod per analogiam refertur ad entia".

Through these comments Albert makes clear that the "createdness" of being does not at all imply the negation of its transcendentality.

In sum, Albert's discussion of the *proprium subiectum* of metaphysics and his ontological conception of First Philosophy are traceable to Avicenna, "the second beginning of metaphysics". But his position has several original features, such as the identification of the scope of metaphysics with the *transcendentia*. His argument that being as being must be the "subject" relies not so much, as it is the case in Avicenna, on the commonness of being (*ens commune*), but on its firstness: *Ens* is the *primum fundamentum* of things and the first concept of the intellect. Its primacy is specified by Albert in yet another manner: A crucial difference with the Arab philosopher is that he understands the priority of being in the sense of *primum creatum*, a notion taken from the *Liber De causis*.

5.5 *Summa theologiae*

Albert's fifth and last project was the *Summa theologiae sive de mirabili scientia dei* (started after 1270), of which the authenticity has been definitively established.[71] When discussing the divine properties in the first part of this work, he extensively deals with "the general concepts" or *transcendentia*: tract. 6 is entitled *De uno, vero, bono*. Albert divides it into three sections: the determination of the concepts "one", "true" and "good" in general (qq. 24–27); their relation to one another and to "being" (q. 28); and the sense, in which each of these concepts belongs to God (q. 29).[72]

The model for Albert's account was the treatise on the first determinations of being "one", true" and "good" in the so-called *Summa Halensis* (see ch. 4.1). A detail points to that dependency. In his exposition on "the good", Albert raises the question whether *bonum* and *pulchrum* are identical.[73] The introduction of the beautiful into the discussion on the

[71] Cf. R. Wielockx, "Zur 'Summa theologiae des Albertus Magnus'", in: *Ephemerides Theologiae Lovaniensis* 66 (1990), pp. 78–110.

[72] Albert the Great, *Summa theologiae*, I, tract. 6 (ed. D. Siedler, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXXV/1, Münster 1978, p. 143). Cf. for the terminology: *ibid.*, I, tract. 6, q. 27, c. 3 (p. 205): "bonum dicit intentionem communem et est de transcendentibus omne genus sicut et ens".

[73] *Ibid.*, q. 26, c. 1, a. 2, III (ed. D. Siedler, p. 177).

good was one of the innovations in the Franciscan *Summa*. Following the example of that work, Albert integrates the doctrine of the transcendentals into a theological synthesis as the metaphysical basis for the consideration of the divine attributes.

In q. 28 of the *Summa*, in his analysis of the relation of the transcendental notions to one another, Albert considers once more the problem of the addition to "being". "One", "true" and "good" do not add a "nature" to "being", which is the first concept of the intellect, but some "modes of being" (*modi existendi* or *essendi*) that cannot be separated from any being.[74] His foundation of this "modal" addition is more strictly ontological in character that his earlier solutions of the problem of the addition.

1. The being of that which is can be taken in two ways: absolutely (*absolutum*) or related (*relatum*) to the principle of being. If it is taken in the first manner, "being" (*ens*) is conceived as the "first"—for it goes without saying that the absolute precedes the relational.
2. The modes of being that the other transcendentals add to "being" are consequent upon the relational consideration of being. This is twofold: being is taken either as related to the formal principle or to the final principle—principles that are one in reality, but different according to their concepts of being-principle.

2a. If being is taken in relation to the proper act of the formal principle, the concept of "one" results. For the proper act of the form is to "determine" (*terminare*) that which is, and what is determined in being is undivided in itself and divided from other things, that is "one".

2b. If being is taken in relation to the act consequent upon the formal principle, the concept of "true" results, because through this act something is "discernible" (*discernibilis*).

3. If being is taken as related to the final principle, the concept of "good" results.[75]

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[74] *Ibid.*, q. 28 (p. 214): "Unde etiam unum, verum et bonum non addunt super ens nisi modos quosdam existendi, qui vel consistunt in negatione vel in effectu consequente". Cf. *ibid.*, ad 6 (p. 214): "modi enim illi essendi a nullo esse separabiles sunt".

[75] *Ibid.*

In conclusion, Albert emphasizes the transcendentality and firstness of "being", "one", "true" and "good". These four are "in everything that is, in the cause as well as in the caused, in the universal as well as in the particular", and nothing can be understood without the immediate presence of these four. *Ens, unum, verum* and *bonum* are therefore convertible with one another—an inference that Albert supports with a reference to Dionysius the Areopagite who holds that "there is nothing that does not participate in the one and in the good".[76]

Conclusion

Albert's rich oeuvre reflects both the doctrinal background and the historical development of the doctrine of the transcendentals in the thirteenth century. His early treatise *De bono* is deeply influenced by the first account of the most common notions in Philip the Chancellor's *Summa de bono*. Albert's last work, the *Summa theologiae*, adopts the systematic treatment *De uno, vero, bono* from the Franciscan *Summa Halensis*. His opposition between the *philosophus* and the *sancti* concerning the transcendentality of the "true" and "good" shows the awareness that different traditions of thought have played a role in the genesis of the doctrine: the Aristotelian-Avicennian tradition and the Platonic-Dionysian tradition. Albert's elaboration of the transcendental way of thought in relation to these traditions resulted in a number of structural innovations.

(i) In his disputation on the "subject" of metaphysics, Albert was the first to connect the doctrine of the *transcendentia* with the ontological understanding of First Philosophy.
(ii) Typical of Albert's conception of transcendentality is his understanding of the firstness and universality of being as that which is *primum creatum*. In his analysis of the order between the transcendentals, he not only sought solutions for the problem of the

[76] *Ibid.*: "Et quia ista quattuor [*sc.* ens, unum, verum, bonum] in omni sunt quod est, et in causa et in causato et in universali et in particulari, nec potest aliquid intelligi esse, nisi statim occurrant ista quattuor inesse ipsi, ista quattuor convertuntur secundum supposita. Et ideo dicit Dionysius, quod 'non est aliquid existentium, quod non participet uno et quod non participet bono'".

addition to "being", but also wanted to make room for the Dionysian "primacy of the good".

(iii) From his earliest works on (*De bono*, q. 1, a. 4), Albert was critical of the application of the idea of "analogy" to the "commonness" of God and creature. Expression of this critical attitude is the notion of *univocatio analogiae* in his commentary on *De divinis nominibus*.

(iv) Albert made an exemplary use of the method of *resolutio* as an avenue to what is first and fundamental. He distinguishes two kinds of resolution. One is the Dionysian reduction of what is caused to the first cause; the other is the Avicennian reduction of something to its most universal predicate that constitutes it in an intrinsic way.

Albert's most famous student was Thomas Aquinas, whose prestige has somewhat overshadowed his master's achievement. Albert's philosophical importance was mainly seen in being Aquinas's teacher, not in the significance of his own thought. But more than in Thomas's writings one can sense in Albert's works that he is breaking new grounds. His teaching in Cologne had a lasting influence on philosophic culture in Germany, on the so-called "German Dominican School", of which Dietrich of Freiberg and Meister Eckhart are the chief representatives (see ch. VIII).[77]

[77] Cf. L. Sturlese, "Albert der Grosse und die Deutsche philosophische Kultur des Mittelalters", in: *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 28 (1981), pp. 133–147 [reprinted in: id., *Homo divinus. Philosophische Projekte in Deutschland zwischen Meister Eckhart und Heinrich Seuse*, Stuttgart 2007, pp. 1–13]. M. J. F. M. Hoenen / A. de Libera (eds.), *Albertus Magnus und der Albertismus. Deutsche philosophische Kultur des Mittelalters*, Leiden-New York-Köln 1995 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 48).

CHAPTER SIX

THOMAS AQUINAS: A FIRST MODEL

Albert the Great's openness to different traditions of thought in his elaboration of the doctrine of the transcendentals was, more than any particular doctrine, directive for his student Thomas Aquinas (1224/5–1274). Like his teacher, Aquinas enters into a discussion both with Aristotelianism—he composed commentaries upon several works of Aristotle, among them the *Posterior Analytics*, *Ethics* and *Metaphysics*—and with the Dionysian corpus, by commenting on *De divinis nominibus*. Two differences to Albert's efforts as a commentator are conspicuous.

First of all, Thomas wrote commentaries on two works of Boethius, which was quite unusual in the century after the *aetas Boetiana*. He composed a commentary on *De trinitate*, which is a significant source for his epistemological and methodological views, and a commentary on *De hebdomadibus*, the most important metaphysical treatise of the Boethian age. Aquinas interprets the axiomatic structure of this treatise from the perspective of the transcendentals. The nine axioms put forward by Boethius can be reduced to "the most common conceptions" (*maxime communia*) "being" (axioms 2–6), "one" (axioms 7–8) and "good" (axiom 9). Through these three notions Aquinas is able to give an order and depth structure to Boethius's axioms, which remain altogether implicit in *De hebdomadibus* itself.[1]

Another difference concerns the *Liber De causis*, which Albertus Magnus included in his Aristotle project, because he considered it a Peripatetic work and the necessary completion of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Aquinas was the first to discover the true, Neoplatonic paternity of this work. In the prologue to his commentary (ca. 1271–2) he points

[1] Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio libri De ebdomadibus*, lect. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. L, Rome 1992, p. 270): "et ideo primo ponit Boetius quasdam conceptiones pertinentes ad ens, secundo quasdam pertinentes ad unum ex quo sumitur ratio simplicis et compositi (…); tercio ponit quasdam conceptiones pertinentes ad bonum". For this commentary, cf. R. te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas*, Leiden – New York – Köln 1995 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 46), pp. 8–44.

out that this book is an "excerpt" from the *Elementatio theologica* of Proclus.[2] His discovery was made possible by the Latin translation of the *Elementatio*, completed in 1268 by his fellow Dominican William of Moerbeke. Commenting on the famous fourth proposition, "The first of created things is being", Thomas explains its Platonic background in terms that express the distance from the transcendental way of thought. According to the Platonists, the more general (*communius*) something is, the more separate (*separatum*) it is. What is more general is also prior (*prius*) in the order of things. Its ontological priority entails causality: it is participated in by what is posterior to it, and is its cause. The Platonists hold further that "the one" and "the good" are the most general (*communissima*); they are even more general than "being". From this it follows that the separate "one" (or "good") is the highest and first principle of things. After the "one" there is nothing so general as "being". Hence, on the Platonic view, separated being itself (*ipsum ens separatum*) is the first among created things.[3] The transcendental way of thought differs from the Platonic position with respect to the nature and the order of the *communissima*. That which is most common is not transcendent, but transcendental; "being" has a conceptual priority to the other common notions. There is thus an anti-Platonic moment in the doctrine of the transcendentals, but on Thomas's view the opposition between the transcendental approach and the Platonic position n is not mutually exclusive. He expresses their complementarity in the prologue to his commentary on (pseudo-)Dionysius's *De divinis nominibus* (see 6.5.2).[4]

In Aquinas's personal works, more systematic reflections on the transcendental notions can be found. In his *Summa theologiae*, he

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[2] Thomas Aquinas, *Super librum De causis expositio*, prol. (ed. H.-D. Saffrey, Fribourg-Louvain 1953, p. 3): "unde videtur [hic Liber de Causis] ab aliquo philosophorum arabum ex praedicto libro Procli excerptus". The term "excerpt" is not quite fair; it minimalizes the achievement of the anonymous author. For this commentary, cf. C. d'Ancona Costa, "Saint Thomas lecteur du 'Liber de Causis'. Bilan des recherches contemporaines concernant le 'De causis' et analyse de l'interprétation thomiste", in: *Revue thomiste* 92 (1992), pp. 785–817. On the difference between Albert's and Aquinas's commentaries, cf. A. de Libera, "Albert le Grand et Thomas d'Aquin interprètes du *Liber de Causis*", in: *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 74 (1990), pp. 347–378. De Libera calls Thomas "le premier philoloque et le premier historien".

[3] Thomas Aquinas, *Super De causis*, lect. 4 (ed. Saffrey, pp. 27,14–28,9).

[4] Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Thomas Aquinas: Aristotelianism versus Platonism?", in: L. G. Benakis (ed.), *Néoplatonisme et philosophie médiévale (Actes du Colloque inter. de Corion, 6–8 oct. 1995)*, Turnhout 1997 (Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale, 6), pp. 147–162.

deals with the individual transcendentals in his discussion of God's goodness, unity and truth. He twice presents a general account of these notions in the "Disputed questions" *De veritate*, dating from his first Parisian professorship (1256–59), in q. 1 "On truth" and in q. 21 "On the good". We shall first focus on these texts.[5]

6.1 Aquinas's systematic account of the transcendentals

De veritate q. 1, a. 1, dealing with the question "What is truth?", contains the most systematic derivation of these notions in the thirteenth century and has been called "the most dense and formal text in the whole history of western thought".[6] That is an exaggeration, but it is without doubt a "basic" text, which would become an authoritative model in the history of the doctrine of the transcendentals. We therefore take this carefully structured account as our point of departure.[7]

The Avicennian analogy argument: The "resolution" into something first

The first thing to note concerning *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, is Thomas's approach to the question "What is truth?" (*quid sit veritas*). The same question was dealt with by Philip the Chancellor in the *Summa de bono* (q. 2), by the *Summa fratris Alexandri* (I, n. 89) and by Albert the Great in *De bono* (q. 1, a. 8), but their approaches are different from Thomas's. They collect a number of definitions of truth from the tradition and attempt to determine both what its primary *ratio* is and how the various definitions relate to each other. In the second part of article 1 Aquinas does the same things, but his starting point is more fundamental: he examines the conditions for all inquiry into what something is. He prepares his reply to the question "What is truth?"

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[5] On Aquinas's doctrine of the transcendentals, see my monograph *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals. The Case of Thomas Aquinas*, Leiden – New York – Köln 1996 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 52) [with literature].

[6] C. Fabro, "The Transcendentality of Ens-Esse and the Ground of Metaphysics", in: International Philosophical Quarterly 6 (1966), pp. 389–427, here p. 407.

[7] Cf. J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, pp. 71–112. G. Ventimiglia, "Il trattato tomista sulle proprieta transcendentali dell'essere", in: *Rivista di Filosofia neo-scolastica* 87 (1995), pp. 51–82.

through a reflective analysis, a "reduction" (*reductio* or *resolutio*) of our concepts to first or transcendental notions.

Aquinas's account begins with an argument for the necessity of such concepts that he has derived from an author whose name is not mentioned until the next passage, Avicenna; it thus shows the immense impact of the Arab philosopher's doctrine of the primary notions. Aquinas adopts the Avicennian analogy between two forms of intellectual knowledge, which he describes as the demonstration of a proposition and the inquiry into what something is:

> Just as in demonstrable matters a reduction must be made to principles known to the intellect *per se*, so likewise in investigating what something is (*quid est*). Else one will fall into an infinite regress in both cases, with the result that science and knowledge of things will perish entirely.[8]

The argument posits an analogy (*sicut… ita*) between the order of *scientia*, for "science" in the proper sense is knowledge on the basis of demonstration, and the order of *diffinitio*, for the definition states what something is, its essence.[9] From the better known member of the analogy, the order of demonstrative knowledge or science, Aquinas concludes, like Avicenna, that a reduction to first principles known through themselves (*per se*) is necessary in the order of concepts as well.

The inquiry into what something is requires antecedent knowledge. Thomas gives elsewhere the example of "music". If one wants to know what music is, one reduces that which is to be defined to something that is more general and hence prior, namely "art". But this resolution to what is previously known cannot proceed indefinitely. An infinite regress would render the formation of concepts impossible. The reductive analysis of what something is comes to an end in "the first conceptions of the intellect".[10]

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[8] Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXII/1, Rome 1975, pp. 4–5): "Sicut in demonstrabilibus oportet fieri reductionem in aliqua principia per se intellectui nota ita investigando quid est unumquodque, alias utrobique in infinitum iretur, et sic periret omnino scientia et cognitio rerum".

[9] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De trinitate*, q. 6, a. 4 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. L, Rome 1992, p. 170), in which Thomas makes a distinction between theoretical knowledge by means of demonstration (*per viam demonstrationis*) and by means of definition (*per viam diffinitionis*).

[10] Aquinas gives the example of "music" in *Quodlibet* VIII, q. 2, a. 2. Cf. for the reduction to "firsts" (*prima*), *Super Boetium De trinitate*, q. 6, a. 4 (ed. Commissio

Thomas's intention in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, has wrongly been interpreted as an analysis of concepts that belongs to dialectics. Now what is obtained through a dialectical process is not science but belief or opinion (*fides vel opinio*). Consequently, the result of the *resolutio* is opinion, a knowledge that is dialectically probable but not yet scientifically certain.[11] But this interpretation misunderstands Aquinas's intention and conflicts with the purport of his exposition. The Avicennian analogy argument wishes to clarify the beginning of human thought by showing the necessity of a reduction to primary notions immediately known. The *resolutio* is a going back to a first conception that is the condition for all further knowledge.

The first conception of the intellect: "Being" (ens)

The next passage in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, reveals the end term of the resolution and thus the first conception of the human intellect:

> That which the intellect first conceives, as best known, and into which it resolves all its conceptions, is being (*ens*), as Avicenna says in the beginning of his *Metaphysics*.[12]

The thesis that being is the first known is repeated by Thomas at many places in his work.[13] It is supported by a reference to Avicenna's

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Leonina, Vol. L, p. 170): "omnis consideratio scientiarum speculatiuarum reducitur in aliqua prima, que quidem homo non habet necesse addiscere aut inuenire, ne oporteat in infinitum procedere, set eorum notitiam naturaliter habet. Et huiusmodi sunt principia demonstrationum indemonstrabilia (…), et etiam prime conceptiones intellectus, ut entis, et unius, et huiusmodi, in que oportet reducere omnes diffinitiones scientiarum predictarum". For an analysis of the entire text, see 6.4.2.

[11] L. Oeing-Hanhoff, "Die Methoden der Metaphysik im Mittelalter", in: P. Wilpert (ed.), Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter. *Ihr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung*, Berlin 1963 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia 2), pp. 71–91, hier p. 79. Id., "Metaphysik, Thomas von Aquin", in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* V, Basel 1980, pp. 1221–1222. L. Honnefelder concurs with this interpretation: "Der zweite Anfang der Metaphysik. Voraussetzungen, Ansätze und Folgen der Wiederbegründung der Metaphysik im 13./14. Jahrhundert", in: J. P. Beckmann / L. Honnefelder / G. Schrimpf / G. Wieland (eds.), *Philosophie im Mittelalter. Entwicklungslinien und Paradigmen*, Hamburg 1987, pp. 165–186, here p. 173.

[12] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, p. 5): "illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum et in quod conceptiones omnes resolvit est ens, ut Avicenna dicit in principio suae Metaphysicae".

[13] Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sententarum*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3; *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 1; q. 21, a. 4 ad 4; *De ente et essentia*, prol.; *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 15; ad 8 and 9 (in contr.); *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 2; q. 11, a. 2 ad 4; I–II, q. 55, a. 4 ad 1; q. 94, a. 2; In I Metaphysicorum, lect. 2, n. 46; IV, lect. 6, n. 605; X, lect. 4, n. 1998; XI, lect. 5, n. 2211.

Metaphysics, but Aquinas, in fact, modifies that exposition in two respects. First, the Arab philosopher states that the primary notions "are impressed in the soul by a first impression (*impressio*)", while Thomas employs the term *conceptio*. The different terminology reflects different epistemological positions. Avicenna holds that the intelligible forms flow into our mind from an active Intelligence, which is separate from our own intellect. Aquinas criticizes his view that the origin of our intellectual knowledge is fully external (*ab extrinseco*).[14] The term "conception" expresses the inner activity of the human intellect in the forming of the first notions. What the intellect forms in itself, when it understands something, is called "conception" by analogy to conception in the realm of natural coming-to-be.[15]

Another and even more striking difference between Thomas's and Avicenna's accounts concerns the number of first concepts. Whereas the latter names a plurality of primary notions, "thing", "being" and "one", the former posits just *one single* conception: "being". This does not mean that Aquinas does not recognize a plurality of first conceptions—in several texts he speaks of "firsts" in the plural.[16] However, unlike Avicenna, he sees an order among these notions, in which "being" has a conceptual priority: it is the first among equals, the *maxime primum*.[17] Thomas does not advance an argument for this firstness in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1. But the reason certainly is that "being" is included in everything that anyone apprehends. "All other conceptions are somehow included in 'being', in a united and indistinct way, as in their principle". Without "being" nothing can be understood by the intellect, for something is knowable, insofar as it is in act.[18] "Being" is the beginning of human thought.

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[14] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 10, a. 6 and q. 11, a. 1.

[15] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium theologiae*, I, c. 38.

[16] Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De trinitate*, q. 6, a. 4 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. L, p. 170): "(…) prime conceptiones intellectus, ut entis, et unius". *Quaestiones de quolibet*, quodlibet VIII, q. 2, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXV/1, Rome 1996, p. 59): "(…) et sic quo usque perueniamus usque ad primas conceptiones humani intellectus [ut entis, unius, boni]".

[17] Thomas uses this expression in De potentia, q. 9, a. 7 ad 6 (ed. P. M. Pession, in: *S. Thomae Aquinatis Quaestiones disputatae*, Vol. 2, Turin-Rome 1949, p. 243): "inter ista quatuor prima [scilicet ens, unum, verum et bonum], maxime primum est ens".

[18] Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3 (ed. R. P. Mandonnet, Paris 1929, p. 200): "et sic simpliciter et absolute ens est prius aliis. Cujus ratio est, quia ens includitur in intellectu eorum, et non e converso. Primum enim quod cadit in imaginatione intellectus, est ens, sine quod nihil potest apprehendi ab intellectu; (…) unde omnia alia includuntur quodammodo in ente unite et indistincte, sicut in principio".

The problem of the addition to "being"

From the thesis that "being" is the first known, Thomas immediately draws the conclusion: "Consequently all other conceptions of the intellect must be gained by an addition to being". After having followed the way of analysis, the *resolutio*, he now takes the opposite direction, that of "synthesis". Here, however, a problem arises that is central in the doctrines of the transcendentals: How is an addition to being possible?

> Nothing, however, can be added to being as if it were extrinsic to it, in the manner in which a difference is added to a genus or an accident to a subject, because every nature is essentially being. It is for this reason that the Philosopher in book III of the *Metaphysics* proves that being cannot be a genus.[19]

In the usual manners of addition, what is added lies outside the concept of that to which it is added: the difference "rational", for instance, does not belong to the essence of the genus "animal". Hence the usual manners of addition are inconceivable in the case of being. "Being" cannot be determined by something that lies outside its essence, because what is extrinsic to being is nothing. Aquinas refers to Aristotle's statement in the third book of his *Metaphysics* (c. 3, 998b 22) "Being is not a genus", which formulates in a negative way the special kind of generality of being. But his argument in *De veritate* gives the semantic commonness of "being" a more positive accent: "every nature is essentially being". Aristotle's negative statement "Being is not a genus" will be transformed into a positive one: "Being is a *transcendens*".

One could be surprised by the phrase: "every nature is essentially being", since Aquinas teaches a real distinction between essence and

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In IV Metaphysicorum, lect. 6, n. 605 (ed. M.-R. Cathala, Turin-Rome 1950, p. 168): "(…) nec aliquid hac operatione potest mente concipi, nisi intelligatur ens". *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 94, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. VI, Rome 1892, p. 169): "Nam illud quod primo cadit in apprehensione, est ens, cuius intellectus includitur in omnibus quaecumque quis apprehendit". *Ibid*., I, q. 5, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. IV, Rome 1888, p. 58): "Primo autem in conceptione cadit ens: quia secundum hoc unumquodque cognoscibile est in quantum est actu".

[19] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, p. 5): "unde oportet quod omnes aliae conceptiones intellectus accipiantur ex additione ad ens. Sed enti non possunt addi aliqua quasi extranea, per modum quo differentia additur generi, vel accidens subiecto, quia quaelibet natura est essentialiter ens; unde probat etiam Philosophus in III Metaphysicae quod ens non potest esse genus".

being (*esse*) in every creature. The meaning of the phrase becomes clearer when we take his other account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1, into consideration. The question in this text is focused on the problem of the addition ("Does 'good' add something to 'being'?") and the reply commences with a systematic analysis of it.

Aquinas distinguishes three ways in which something can be added to something else: First (i), the addition of a reality (*res*) which is outside the essence of the thing to which it is added. An example of this manner is the addition of the accidental form "white" to "body". The second way (ii) is the addition by contracting and determining (*per modum contrahendi et determinandi*) something else. "Man", for instance, adds something to "animal", but not in the sense that there is in man any reality altogether outside the essence of animal. "Animal" is rather contracted by this manner of addition, because that which is comprised determinately and actually in the concept of "man" is contained implicitly and, as it were, potentially in the concept of "animal". The third way (iii) is the addition of something merely conceptual (*secundum rationem*). This is the case when something belongs to the concept of the one that does not belong to the concept of the other, and that which is added does not concern something in nature but only in reason.[20]

The question now is which of these ways of addition are possible with respect to "being in general" (*ens universale*), which is the first conception of the intellect. (i) The first manner, the addition of something real, is excluded, since there is no natural thing which is "outside the essence of universal being". It is in this sense that the phrase "every nature is essentially being" in q. 1, a. 1 has to be understood. Only to some *particular* being something can be added in this first manner. (ii) In the second way, the addition by contracting and determining, something can be added to "being", because being is contracted by the ten categories (*genera*). They do not add an accident or a difference that is outside the essence of being, but a determinate mode of being (*modus essendi*), founded in the existence of a thing. If the "good" would add something to "being" in this second way, it would become a category of being. But Aristotle, in his *Ethics*, shows that the good, just as being, is found in all categories and thus "transcends" them—another example of the "transcendental" reading of Aristotle

[20] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXII/3, Rome 1976, p. 592).

in the Middle Ages. (iii) Therefore, the "good" must either add something to "being" in the third way or add nothing at all. It is, however, not "nugatory" to say "good being"; "good" is not synonymous with "being". It thus adds something merely conceptual.[21]

Aquinas's solution to the problem of the addition to "being" in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1 unites the different elements of the analysis in q. 21, a. 1. After having established that "being" cannot be differentiated by something lying outside of being, for nothing is extrinsic to it (the first way of addition in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1), he argues that an addition to "being" is only possible in the sense that what is added expresses a mode of being (*modus essendi*) that is not expressed by the term 'being' itself. The determination of being occurs through the expression or *inner* explication of its modes. This *modal* explication can come about in two ways. One is that the mode expressed is some *special* mode of being. This mode corresponds with the second way of addition in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1, that by contracting and determining being. The other is that the mode expressed is "a *general* mode consequent to every being", a mode that must correspond with the third way of addition in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1.[22] In this case something is explicated that belongs to being in general. As we shall see, the opposition between the special and the general modes of being refers to the opposition between categorial and transcendental being.

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[21] *Ibid*. (pp. 592–593): "Non autem potest esse quod super ens universale aliquid addat aliquid primo modo, quamvis illo modo possit fieri additio super aliquod ens particulare; nulla enim res naturae est quae sit extra essentiam entis universalis quamvis aliqua res sit extra essentiam huius entis. Secundo autem modo inveniuntur aliqua addere super ens quia ens contrahitur per decem genera, quorum unumquodque addit aliquid super ens, non quidem aliquod accidens vel aliquam differentiam quae sit extra essentiam entis sed determinatum modum essendi qui fundatur in ipsa existentia rei. Sic autem bonum non addit aliquid super ens, cum bonum dividatur aequaliter in decem genera ut ens, ut patet in I Ethicorum. Et ideo oportet quod vel nihil addat super ens vel addat aliquid quod sit in ratione tantum; si enim adderet aliquid reale oporteret quod per rationem boni contraheretur ens ad aliquod speciale genus. Cum autem ens sit id quod primo cadit in conceptione intellectus, ut Avicenna dicit, oportet quod omne aliud nomen vel sit synonymum enti, quod de bono dici non potest cum non nugatorie dicatur ens bonum, vel addat aliquid ad minus secundum rationem: et sic oportet quod bonum ex quo non contrahit ens addat aliquid super ens quod sit rationis tantum".

[22] *Ibid*., q. 1, a. 1 (Vol. XXII/1, p. 5): "sed secundum hoc aliqua dicuntur addere super ens in quantum exprimunt modum ipsius entis qui nomine entis non exprimitur, quod dupliciter contingit. Uno modo ut modus expressus sit aliquis specialis modus entis (…). Alio modo ita quod modus expressus sit modus generalis consequens omne ens".

Explication of the special modes of being: The categories

The explication of the special modes of being occurs in and through the ten highest genera, which Aristotle called the "categories". They form the first division of being, for the categories contract being to some nature or essence: not every being is a substance or is a quantity. The idea of an "inner" explication of being was Aquinas's answer to the problem of how being can be divided without becoming a genus. In the account in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, he stresses the ontological basis of the categories. There are "different degrees of entity" to which different modes of being correspond. From these modes the different genera of things are taken. He works this out only for the first category. The special mode of being that is expressed by the name "substance" is being through itself (*per se ens*).[23] In this text Thomas is not concerned with describing the features of the diverse accidental modes of being. But in two places in his work, in his commentary on the *Metaphysics* and in that on the *Physics*, he presents a kind of "deduction" and philosophical justification of all the ten categories.[24]

The first modal explication of being incorporates a central teaching from Aristotle's ontology. It had been his discovery that the infinite variety of things can be reduced to ten *genera generalisima*. But what deserves attention is that Aquinas sets the doctrine of the categories in a framework that is not found in the Philosopher. The categories express *special* modes of being, the most general genera *contract* being. These qualifications presuppose the other modal explication of being.

Explication of the general modes of being: The transcendentals

The explication of being can also concern a *modus generalis consequens omne ens.* These general modes are signified by the *transcendentia*. The term is not employed in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, but it does

[23] *Ibid*.: "Uno modo ut modus expressus sit aliquis specialis modus entis; sunt enim diversi gradus entitatis secundum quos accipiuntur diversi modi essendi et iuxta hos modos accipiuntur diversa rerum genera: substantia enim non addit super ens aliquam differentiam quae designet aliquam naturam superadditam enti sed nomine substantiae exprimitur specialis quidam modus essendi, scilicet per se ens, et ita est in aliis generibus".

[24] Thomas Aquinas, *In V Metaphysicorum*, lect. 9, nn. 889–890. *In III Physicorum*, lect. 5, n. 322. Cf. J. F. Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas's Derivation of the Aristotelian Categories (Predicaments)", in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 25 (1987), pp. 13–34.

appear later in the work, namely in q. 21, a. 3, where the order of the *nomina transcendentia* is explained.[25] Thomas uses the word *transcendentia* more often than his predecessors, although by no means frequently. It occurs fourteen times in his work; strikingly, half of these loci are concerned with "multitude" (*multitudo*).[26] In *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, Aquinas presents a systematic derivation of the transcendentals, which has been called a "deduction" by some scholars on analogy to Kant's deduction of the *a priori* concepts.[27] His primary ordering principle is that the expressed mode of being pertains to every being in itself (*in se*) or in relation to something else (*in ordine ad aliud*).

The first group of ("absolute") transcendentals is further subdivided, since something can be affirmed and denied of every being regarded in itself. [1] What can be said *positively* of every being is its essence, according to which it is said to be, and this is expressed by the name *res* ("thing"). Aquinas integrates the Avicennian notion of *res* into his account and explains the distinction between "being" and "thing" through a reference to the *Metaphysics* of the Arab philosopher: the name *ens* is taken from the "act of being" (*actus essendi*), while the name *res* expresses the quiddity or essence of something.[28] He interprets Avicenna's concept of *ens* in terms of the "act of being", a phrase that is typical of Aquinas's own understanding of being as "actuality". [2] *Negatively*, too, something can be said of every being. This is the

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[25] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 3 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/3, p. 598): "Unde istorum nominum transcendentium talis est ordo, si secundum se considerentur, quod post ens est unum, deinde verum post unum, et deinde post verum bonum".

[26] Besides *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 3 these texts are: *In I Sent*., d. 2, q. 1, a. 5 ad 2 (*res*); *In II Sent*., d. 34, q. 1, a. 2 ad 1 (*bonum et malum*); *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 30, a. 3 (twice *multitudo*), ad 1 (*unum*) and ad 2 (*multitudo*); q. 39, a. 3 ad 3 (*res*); q. 50, a. 3 ad 1 (*multitudo*); q. 93, a. 9 (*unum*); *De spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 8 ad 15 (*multitudo*); *In III Physicorum*, lect. 8 (*multitudo*); lect. 12 (*multitudo*); *De virtutibus in communi*, a. 2 ad 8.

[27] Cf. S. Breton, "L'idée de transcendental et la genèse des transcendentaux chez saint Thomas d'Aquin", in: *Saint Thomas d'Aquin aujourd'hui*, Paris 1963 (Recherches de Philosophie, 6), pp. 47–74, here p. 57. But Thomas's account never claims that the necessity of the series of first concepts can be shown exclusively on the basis of the logical functions of reason.

[28] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, p. 5): "Si primo modo, hoc est dupliciter quia vel exprimitur in ente aliquid affirmative vel negative; non autem invenitur aliquid affirmative dictum absolute quod possit accipi in omni ente nisi essentia eius secundum quam esse dicitur, et sic imponitur hoc nomen res, quod in hoc differt ab ente, secundum Avicennam in principio Metaphysicae, quod ens sumitur ab actu essendi sed nomen rei exprimit quiditatem vel essentiam entis".

traditional place of the transcendental *unum* ("one"), based on the Aristotelian notion of "indivision", for "one" is nothing other than "undivided being" (*ens indivisum*).[29]

The second group of transcendentals, the "relational" ones, is also subdivided. [3] The relation of one being to another can be first regarded according to their division (*secundum divisionem*). This aspect is expressed by the transcendental *aliquid* ("something"), a name that means as it were *aliud quid* ("another what"). In this way Aquinas again incorporates an "Arabic" transcendental into his exposition. However, whereas Avicenna names *aliquid* as a synonym of *ens*, he regards it as a distinct notion. Aquinas describes it as the reverse side of "one". He splits the phrase the *Summa fratris Alexandri* and Albert the Great offer as expressing the *ratio* of the "one", i.e. "being undivided in itself and divided from others", into two parts and reserves the last part for the content of *aliquid*: "Just as being is called *one* insofar as it is undivided in itself, so it is called *something* insofar as it is divided from others".[30]

In addition to this mode there is a more positive relational mode of being, namely, according to the conformity (*secundum convenientiam*) of one being to another. The condition for such a relation is something that is suited by nature to conform to every being. The human soul is such a being, for it is "in a sense all things" (*quodammodo omnia*), as Aristotle states (*De anima* III, c. 8, 431b 21).[31] *Quodammodo*, since the soul is not all things by its *being*; the rational soul is in itself a particular nature, an *aliquid*, distinct from other things. Man is all things

[29] *Ibid.*: "negatio autem consequens omne ens absolute est indivisio, et hanc exprimit hoc nomen unum: nihil aliud enim est unum quam ens indivisum". For the convertibility of "being" and "one" in Aquinas, see also *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 11, a. 1. Cf. J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, pp. 201–242. L. Oeing-Hanhoff, *Ens et unum convertuntur. Stellung und Gehalt des Grundsatzes in der Philosophie des hl. Thomas von Aquin*, Münster 1953 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 37/3).

[30] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, p. 5): "Si autem modus entis accipiatur secundo modo, scilicet secundum ordinem unius ad alterum, hoc potest esse dupliciter. Uno modo secundum divisionem unius ab altero et hoc exprimit hoc nomen aliquid: dicitur enim aliquid quasi aliud quid, unde sicut ens dicitur unum in quantum est indivisum in se ita dicitur aliquid in quantum est ab aliis divisum".

[31] *Ibid.*: "Alio modo secundum convenientiam unius entis ad aliud, et hoc quidem non potest esse nisi accipiatur aliquid quod natum sit convenire cum omni ente; hoc autem est anima, quae 'quodam modo est omnia', ut dicitur in III De anima".

through the universal scope of its spiritual *faculties*; he is marked, one could say, by a transcendental openness. The correlation between *anima* and being is twofold, for in the soul there is both a cognitive faculty and an appetitive faculty. [4] The conformity of being to the appetite is expressed by the name *bonum*, for "the good" is according to Aristotle's definition at the beginning of his *Ethics*, "that which all desire". [5] The conformity of being to the intellect is expressed by the name *verum* ("true").[32]

With that, the derivation of the transcendentals is complete; the remainder of the question focuses on the definition of "truth". We leave this discussion aside, with one exception. Thomas mentions a number of definitions, among which an anonymous determination: "the true is the indivision of being and that which is" (*verum est indivisio esse et quod est*). The formula can be traced back to the beginning of the doctrine of the transcendentals in Philip the Chancellor, who understands all properties of being in terms of "indivision" (see ch. III). Thomas, however, concludes that the definition which Philip had regarded as secondary actually expresses the *ratio* of truth perfectly: truth is "the adequation of thing and intellect".[33] This definition expresses most fully the relational character of truth. For Aquinas it is obvious that "all who define truth in the right way place the intellect in its definition".[34]

In *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, Aquinas presents six transcendentals, including "being". His derivation of the general modes of being that manifest the different "faces" of being can be summarized schematically as follows:

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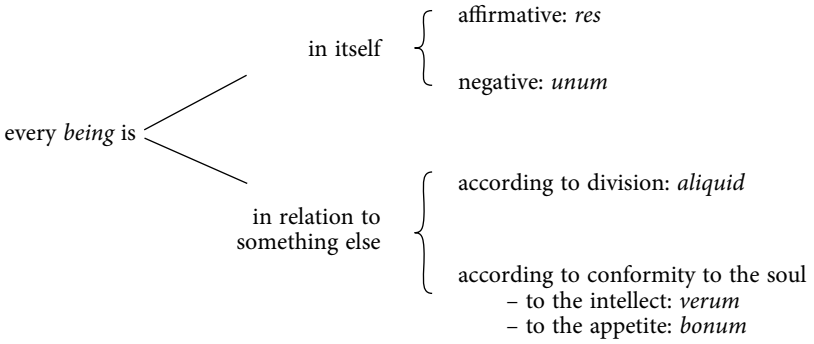
[32] *Ibid*.: "in anima autem est vis cognitiva et appetitiva; convenientiam ergo entis ad appetitum exprimit hoc nomen bonum, unde in principio Ethicorum dicitur quod 'bonum est quod omnia appetunt', convenientiam vero entis ad intellectum exprimit hoc nomen verum". For the convertibility of "being" and "true" in Aquinas, cf. also Summa theologiae, I, q. 16, a. 3. Cf. J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, pp. 243–289. For the convertibility of "being" and "good", cf. also *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 2 and *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 1. Cf. J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, pp. 294–334. S. MacDonald (ed.), *Being and Goodness. The Concept of the Good in Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology*, Ithaca-London 1991.

[33] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, p. 6): "(…) adaequatio intellectus et rei dicitur, et in hoc formaliter ratio veri perficitur".

[34] *Ibid.*, q. 21, a. 1 (Vol. XXII/3, p. 593): "et ideo omnes recte diffinientes verum ponunt in eius diffinitione intellectum".



A peculiarity of the text must still be pointed out. The Scholastic *quaestio* usually takes the form of a "whether" question (f. i. "Whether God exists"), because such a question can be either affirmed or denied. The question raised in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, however, is a "what" question ("What is truth?"), but the problem that actually stands in the background is the question, whether the "true" is altogether identical with "being". The text begins with a number of objections claiming, on the basis of Augustine's definition "the true is that which is" (*Soliloquia* II, 5), that "being" and the "true" are completely the same. The outcome of Thomas's analysis is that "true" is a transcendental term expressing something that is not expressed by "being", namely the relation to the intellect, the "intelligibility" of things.

Aquinas considers the relation among the transcendentals according to the model first formulated by Philip the Chancellor. Their relation is twofold: an identity *secundum rem*, but a difference *secundum rationem*. The transcendentals are identical "in the supposit" (*in supposito*) or "in the subject" (*in subjecto*), that is, when they are taken "materially" as referring to the supposit of the common form ("that which is, is one, is true, is good"). Expression of this identity is their convertibility in the proposition: every being is good, and every good is being. In contrast to the categories, the transcendentals do not exclude but include one another. Although transcendental terms are convertible, they are not on that account synonyms, for they possess different *rationes*: the other transcendentals add something conceptually to the first transcendental, "being".[35]

[35] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3 (ed. Mandonnet, pp. 199–200): "Si autem comparemus ea [sc. ens, bonum, unum, verum] ad invicem, hoc potest esse dupliciter: vel secundum suppositum; et sic convertuntur ad invicem,

Innovations

In comparison with the doctrines of his predecessors Aquinas's exposition of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, contains a number of new elements, namely, the attempt to a systematic integration of the Avicennian notions of *res* and *aliquid*, and the idea of a correlation between the soul and being.

1. In some other texts, Aquinas also states that "thing" belong to the transcendentals.[36] A remarkable example is to be found in his Commentary on book IV of the *Metaphysics*, in which Thomas introduces "thing" as a transcendental property in connection with Aristotle's first argument for the convertibility of "being" and "one". This argument is that "one man" (*unus homo*), "being man" (*ens homo*) and "man" are the same thing, and nothing different is expressed by repeating the terms (1003b 26–28). Thomas is obviously struck by the fact that Aristotle in his argument speaks not only of "being" and "one" but also of "man". He proceeds to give this last concept a transcendental twist through the notion of "thing":

> It should be noted that the name "man" is imposed from the quiddity or nature of man, and the name "thing" (*res*) from the quiddity only; but the name "being" (*ens*) is imposed from the act of being, and the name "one" (*unum*) from order or the lack of division, for what is one is undivided being. What has an essence and a quiddity by reason of

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et sunt idem in supposito, nec unquam derelinquunt se; vel secundum intentiones eorum; et sic simpliciter et absolute ens est prius aliis (…). Alia vero quae diximus, scilicet bonum, verum et unum, addunt super ens, non quidem naturam aliquam, sed rationem". For Aquinas's terminology, cf., for instance, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. IV, p. 56): "bonum et ens sunt idem secundum rem, sed differunt secundum rationem tantum"; *ibid.*, II-II, q. 109, a. 2 ad 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. IX, Rome 1897, p. 417): "Verum et bonum subjecto quidem convertuntur: quia omne verum est bonum, et omne bonum est verum"; q. 47, a. 4 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. VIII, Rome 1895, p. 417): "Bonum autem potest dici dupliciter: uno modo, materialiter, pro eo quod est bonum; alio modo, formaliter, secundum rationem boni"; *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 13 (ed. P. M. Pession, p. 244): "unum et ens convertuntur secundum supposita; sed tamen unum addit secundum rationem, privationem divisionis; et propter hoc non sunt synonyma, quia synonyma sunt quae significant idem secundum rationem eamdem".

[36] Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 5 ad 2 (ed. Mandonnet, p. 75): "Res est de transcendentibus"; *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 39, a. 3 ad 3. On *res* as transcendental, S. Ducharme, "Note sur le transcendental 'res' selon Saint Thomas", in: *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 10 (1940), section spéciale, pp. 85*–99*.

> that essence, and what is undivided in itself, are the same. Hence these three—*res, ens*, and *unum*—signify absolutely the same but according to diverse concepts (*rationes*).[37]

Aquinas considers "being" (*ens*) as a complex notion. It is nothing other than *quod est* ("what is") and "thus signifies both a thing (*res*), by the expression *quod*, and being (*esse*), by the expression *est*".[38] In the text in the *Metaphysics* commentary, as in *De veritate*, Aquinas bases the conceptual difference between *ens* and *res* on a real complexity in the structure of that which is. In every thing two principles are to be considered, namely, its quiddity and its being (*esse*). The name *res* is derived from the first component, the name *ens* from the second. Aquinas attributes this distinction to Avicenna,[39] but, in fact, he takes issue with Avicenna's understanding of being. According to the Arab philosopher *ens* is a "concomitant" of "thing"; it signifies something added to the essence in the manner of an accident. But in Thomas's view, the *esse*, from which the name *ens* is taken, is the very actuality of every essence or nature. With personal emphasis he states: "What I call *esse* is the actuality of all acts and thus the perfection of all perfections".[40]

Has Aquinas really managed to incorporate *res* into the doctrine? In *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1 the mode of being expressed by *res* is said to add something *positive* to "being". But this statement is difficult to reconcile with the account in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1, in which he points out that transcendentals can only add something *secundum rationem* to "being" and that such a conceptual addition is only possible as a negation and a kind of relation. It seems that the Avicennian "thing", the only transcendental that is based on the quidditative component in the ontological structure of that which is, does not fit well into Aquinas's systematization.

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[37] Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Metaphysicorum*, lect. 2, n. 553 (ed. Cathala, p. 155): "Sciendum est enim quod hoc nomen Homo, imponitur a quidditate, sive a natura hominis; et hoc nomen Res imponitur a quidditate tantum; hoc vero nomen Ens, imponitur ab actu essendi: et hoc nomen Unum, ab ordine vel indivisione. Est enim unum ens indivisum. Idem autem est quod habet essentiam et quidditatem per illam essentiam, et quod est in se indivisum. Unde ista tria, res, ens, unum, significant omnino idem, sed secundum diversas rationes".

[38] Thomas Aquinas, *In I Peryermeneias*, lect. 5, n. 71.

[39] Cf. also *In I Sententiarum*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1; d. 25, q. 1, a. 4 (ed. Mandonnet, pp. 611–612): "secundum Avicennam (…), hoc nomen 'ens' et 'res' differunt secundum quod est duo considerare in re, scilicet quidditatem et rationem ejus, et esse ipsius; et a quidditate sumitur hoc nomen 'res'".

[40] Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2 ad 9.

2. *Aliquid* is presented as a distinct transcendental in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, but not anywhere else in Thomas's work; it therefore seems to play a marginal role in his thought. Recent studies, however, have underlined the importance of *aliquid* (in the sense of *aliud quid*) as a bridge towards the modern "philosophy of the difference".[41] An interesting connection deserves our attention: "something" belongs to the relational transcendentals and is described as the reverse side of the "one". Whereas *unum* expresses that being is undivided *in itself*—and therefore does not deny multiplicity, but division—, *aliquid* means that one being "is divided from others". One could consider *aliquid* as the concept of what is presupposed in the idea of relational transcendentals. The condition for the relationality is that there is something else (*aliud*), that is to say, a multitude of beings. The notion of *aliquid* is connected with the notion of *multitudo*, expressing that one thing is not another.[42] This connection may explain the notable fact that the term *transcendens* is used most frequently by Thomas with respect to the notion of "multitude".

3. The most important innovation is Aquinas's explanation of the relational transcendentals "true" and "good" by the idea of a correlation between the human soul and being: *anima est quodammodo omnia*.[43] All reference to the human soul is absent in Albert the Great's views of *verum* and *bonum*. It is true that in the *Summa fratris Alexandri* one of the ordering principles of the first determinations of being

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[41] Cf. P. W. Rosemann, *Omne ens est aliquid. Introduction à la lecture du "système" philosophique de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Louvain-Paris 1996. Id., "*Aliquid*: Ein vergessenes Transzendentale", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, Berlin-New York 1998 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 26), pp. 529–537. E. Tiefensee, "'*Ens et aliquid convertuntur*'—oder: Sein ist immer anders. Ein möglicher Brückenschlag zwischen der mittelalterlichen Seinsphilosophie und der spätmodernen 'Philosophie der Differenz'", in: J. Brachtendorf (ed.), *Prudentia und Contemplatio. Ethik und Metaphysik im Mittelalter (Festschrift für Georg Wieland zum 65. Geburtstag)*, Paderborn-München 2002, pp. 170–195.

[42] Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 7 (ed. P. M. Pession, p. 243): "Et sic (…) multitudo addit duas negationes, prout scilicet aliquid est in se indivisum, et prout est ab alio divisum". Cf. for this connection J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, pp. 222–223 and pp. 225–226.

[43] J. B. Metz, *Christliche Anthropozentrik. Ueber die Denkform des Thomas von Aquin*, Munich 1962, understands Thomas as "the father of modern thought" on account of his anthropocentrism in *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (see p. 50 and p. 52, n. 17). But this conclusion is precipitous, for the question is whether the term "anthropocentrism", when used to describe Thomas's thought, has the same meaning as in modern thought.

is anthropological: the relation of being to the human soul (see ch. 4.1), yet the differences from Thomas's approach are obvious. First, relationality is one of the ways in which the transcendental determinations can be considered and is therefore not distinctive for the "true" and the "good" but holds also for the "one". Furthermore, within the Franciscan milieu, the basis of the relation of being to the soul is trinitarian. Man is the image of God on account of the (Augustinian) triad of his faculties: *memoria-intelligentia-voluntas.* For Aquinas, in contrast, the ontological basis for the relationality of "true" and "good" is the Aristotelian thesis "the soul is in a sense all things", which, in his commentary on *De anima*, he rephrases as "man (*homo*) is in a sense *totum ens*".[44]

This idea determines Aquinas's view of the perfection of intellectual substances and the special place man has among other beings in the world. Knowing beings are distinguished from non-knowing beings in that the latter have only their own form, whereas knowing beings are by nature able to assimilate also the forms of other things. Hence their nature has "a greater amplitude and extension". It is the privilege of an intellectual substance to be in a sense "all things", insofar as it is able to comprehend being in its totality (*totius entis comprehensiva*).[45]

On account of the correlation between being and the *anima* the distinction between the faculties of the soul, intellect and will, cannot concern different *things*, but is to be taken from the different ways in which being is object of the soul. Being is related to the soul in two ways. In one way, a thing can be in the soul not according to its own mode of being but in a spiritual manner, that is, according to its *species* or similitude. This relation expresses the formal characteristic (*ratio*) of knowability and thus indicates the way in which being is the

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[44] Thomas Aquinas, *Sentencia libri De anima*, III, c. 7 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XLV/1, Rome 1984, p. 236).

[45] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 14, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. IV, p. 166): "cognoscentia a non cognoscentibus in hoc distinguuntur, quia non cognoscentia nihil habent nisi formam suam tantum; sed cognoscens natum est habere formam etiam rei alterius, nam species cogniti est in cognoscente. Unde manifestum est quod natura rei non cognoscentis est magis coarctata et limitata: natura autem rerum cognoscentium habet maiorem amplitudinem et extensionem. Propter quod dicit Philosophus (…) quod *anima est quodammodo omnia*". *Summa contra Gentiles*, III, c. 112 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XIV, Rome 1926, p. 356): "Naturae autem intellectuales maiorem habent affinitatem ad totum quam aliae naturae: nam unaquaeque intellectualis substantia est quodammodo omnia, inquantum totius entis comprehensiva est suo intellectu".

object of the intellect. This object is "the true", for *verum* expresses the relation of being to the intellect. In another way, something is the object of the soul insofar as the soul is inclined to it in itself. This relation expresses the formal characteristic of appetibility and indicates the way in which being is the object of the will. This object is "the good", for *bonum* expresses the relation of being to appetite.[46] The triad "being-true-good" corresponds, qua formal objects, with the triad "soul-intellect-will".

The account in De veritate *q. 21, a. 1*

The derivation of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1, is somewhat different from that in q. 1, a. 1. It is preceded by the consideration of the problem of the addition to "being" and the argument we analyzed above that the only way of addition to being in general possible for the "good" (and the other transcendental perfections) is an addition *secundum rationem.* The starting point for Thomas's derivation is therefore the question of what can be added conceptually to "being", the first conception of the intellect.

His answer sees just two possibilities: "What pertains to reason alone, however, can be twofold only: negation and a kind of relation. For every absolute affirmation (*positio absoluta*) signifies something existing in the nature of things". "One" adds a negation to "being", for "one" signifies "undivided being". But "true" and "good" are said positively, so they can only add to being a relation of reason[47]—not a real relation, for this relation is one of the categories that contract being.[48]

Aquinas puts considerable effort into explaining the nature of a relation of reason. Such a relation occurs when the relation is nonmutual, since it consists in a unilateral dependency. The dependent member of the relation is really referred to its correlative, but the converse does not hold; the independent member is referred to the other only in thought. An illustration is the relation between knowledge (*scientia*)

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[46] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 22, a. 10.

[47] *Ibid*., q. 21, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/3, p. 593): "Id autem quod est rationis tantum non potest esse nisi duplex, scilicet negatio et aliqua relatio. Omnis enim positio absoluta aliquid in rerum natura existens significat. Sic ergo supra ens, quod est prima conceptio intellectus, unum addit id quod est rationis tantum, scilicet negationem: dicitur enim unum quasi ens indivisum; sed verum et bonum positive dicuntur; unde non possunt addere nisi relationem quae sit rationis tantum".

[48] *Ibid*., ad 3 (p. 594): "omnis relatio realis est in genere determinato, sed relationes non reales possunt circuire omne ens".

and its object (*scibile*). Knowledge depends upon the object; the object does not depend upon knowledge. The relation of knowledge to the knowable is real, but that of the object to knowledge is a relation of reason, because the knowable is only thought in relation to knowledge. The same holds for all things that are related to one another as the perfective (*perfectivum*) to the perfectible (*perfectibile*). This model of a nonreciprocal relation serves as a guideline for Aquinas's further account. "True" and "good" must add to the concept of being the relation of that which perfects (*respectum perfectivi*).[49]

In view of the determination of this relation, Thomas observes that in any being two aspects are to be considered: the intelligible nature of its species (*ratio speciei*) and being itself (*ipsum esse*) by which it subsists in that species. This difference is similar to the one he used for the distinction between the concepts of *ens* and *res*: The name 'being' is taken from the act of being, the name 'thing' from the quiddity and its *ratio*. According to both aspects a being can be perfective.

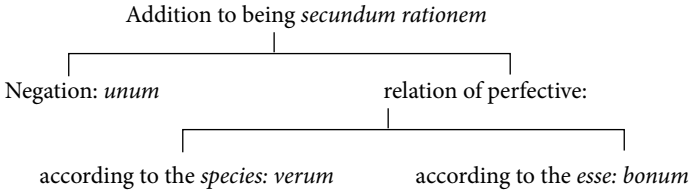
A being can be perfective only according to its species. In this way the intellect is perfected, because a being is not in the intellect according to its own, natural being, but in a spiritual manner. It is this mode of perfecting that "the true" adds to being, for truth is in the mind, as Aristotle states in book VI of the *Metaphysics*. This statement is for the ontological character of the transcendental "true" not unproblematic (see ch. 2.3.2); therefore, Aquinas adds: "Every being is said to be true, insofar as it is conformed or conformable to the intellect".[50] A being can also be perfective of another not only according to the intelligible nature of its species, but also according to the act of being (*esse*) which

[49] *Ibid*., a. 1 (p. 593): "Illa autem relatio (…) invenitur esse rationis tantum secundum quam dicitur referri id quod non dependet ad id ad quod refertur, sed e converso cum ipsa relatio quaedam dependentia sit, sicut patet in scientia et scibili (…). Et ita est in omnibus aliis quae se habent ut mensura et mensuratum, vel perfectivum et perfectibile. Oportet igitur quod verum et bonum super intellectum entis addant respectum perfectivi".

[50] *Ibid*.: "In quolibet autem ente est duo considerare, scilicet ipsam rationem speciei et esse ipsum quo aliquid subsistit in specie illa. Et sic aliquod ens potest esse perfectivum dupliciter: uno modo secundum rationem speciei tantum, et sic ab ente perficitur intellectus qui percipit rationem entis, nec tamen ens est in eo secundum esse naturale; et ideo hunc modum perficiendi addit verum super ens: verum enim est in mente ut Philosophus dicit in VI Metaphysicae, et unumquodque ens in tantum dicitur verum in quantum est conformatum vel conformabile intellectui".

it has in reality. This mode of perfecting is expressed by "the good", for, as Aristotle states, unlike the true, the good is in things.[51]

Thomas's derivation of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1, can be presented schematically as follows:



When we compare the derivation in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1, with the one in q. 1, a. 1, it is noticeable that there is no consensus about the number of transcendentals: the explanation in q. 21, a. 1, limits itself to the traditional triad "one", "true" and "good". But the main difference concerns the determinations "true" and "good". In *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, they are regarded with respect to the rational soul (*anima est quodammodo omnia*) with its cognitive and its appetitive faculties; in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1, they are viewed from the two ways in which being can be perfective: according to its *species* and according to its *esse*. There is no reason, however, to interpret this difference as a sign of a development in Aquinas's thought from an anthropocentric toward a more ontological perspective. The hypothesis of a development seems improbable because in a later text, in the disputed questions *De potentia*, "true" and "good" are also understood in respect of the faculties of the rational soul.[52]

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[51] *Ibid*., q. 21, a. 1 (Vol. XXII/3, p. 593): "Alio modo ens est perfectivum alterius non solum secundum rationem speciei sed etiam secundum esse quod habet in rerum natura, et per hunc modum est perfectivum bonum; bonum enim in rebus est ut Philosophus dicit in VI Metaphysicae".

[52] Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 6 (ed. P. M. Pession, p. 243): "Oportet autem quod alia tria super ens addant aliquid quod ens non contrahat (…). Hoc autem esse non potest nisi addant aliquid secundum rationem tantum; hoc autem est vel negatio (…) vel relatio ad [Pession: vel] aliquid quod natum sit referri universaliter ad ens; et hoc est vel intellectus, ad quem importat relationem verum, aut appetitus, ad quem importat relationem bonum". [For the correction of the Pession reading, cf. R. W. Schmidt, *The Domain of Logic according to St. Thomas Aquinas*, The Hague 1966, p. 91, n. 48.] These *quaestiones disputatae* were held at Rome in 1265–66; for this dating, cf. J. A. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino*: *his life, thought, and works, with corrigenda and addenda*, Washington 1983, p. 363).

The difference between *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1 and q. 21, a. 1 is primarily determined by the fact that their subjects are different: the first text is focused on the true, the latter on the good. Both are *relational* transcendentals, but there is dissimilarity between the true and the good which makes the perspective of the true the reverse of the perspective of the good. This dissimilarity is illustrated by Aristotle's statement in book VI of the *Metaphysics* (1027b 25), quoted by Aquinas in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1: "Truth and falsity do not exist, as good and evil, in things, but in the mind". The true, the end term of a cognitive process, is in the intellect; knowledge is a process of assimilation. The good, the end-term of the appetite, is in things; appetite is an inclination toward things. For this reason it is natural that in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, the distinction between the true and the good is explained from the perspective of the soul and both its faculties in relation to being, and that in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1, this difference is explained from the perspective of being and its twofold structure of *species* and *esse* in relation to the soul. Between the two texts there is no fundamental opposition but a difference in perspective determined by the nature of the subject.

Aquinas's classic account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, is usually studied and analyzed as a self-contained text. But this doctrine is intrinsically linked to views on metaphysics, the order of intellectual knowledge and modes of predication—connections that need explication. Since transcendentals are the *communissima* and express "the general modes consequent on every being", the doctrine appears to be embedded in the science of being in general or metaphysics (6.2). The transcendental notions are literally "fundamental", since they are the foundation of theoretical knowledge and of practical knowledge (6.3). They are the "firsts" (*prima*), the primary concepts, and as such "the proper object" of the intellect (6.4). Transcendentals are also divine names and thus raise the question of their relation to the divine (6.5).

6.2 Metaphysics as the *scientia communis*

Thomas twice explains his conception of metaphysics systematically, first in his commentary on Boethius's work *De trinitate* (1256–59), and later in the *Prooemium* of his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (dateable ca. 1270). Both expositions determine the "proper subject" of

metaphysics, but with distinct aims: the Boethius commentary wants to show the difference between First Philosophy and Christian theology, the prologue of the *Metaphysics* commentary establishes the unity of First Philosophy in itself. We focus on the latter text, because in the second commentary we can grasp the evolution of the discipline since "the second beginning of metaphysics" in Avicenna and its reception by Albert the Great.

The "subject" of metaphysics: Ens commune[53]

In the *Prooemium* of his *Metaphysics* commentary, in which he is clearly writing in his own name, Aquinas addresses a number of issues that are usually treated in a prologue as an *accessus* to the work: the need for a first and highest science, the diverse classes of objects with which such a science deals; its proper "subject", and the different names attributed to it.[54] In this text, several elements of his account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* return.

Thomas's exposition starts with a syllogism demonstrating that one science must be the director or ruler of the others, for when several things are directed to one end, one of them must be director or ruler and the rest directed or ruled. This finality also obtains for the sciences, since they are directed to one end, namely to the perfection of man.[55] *Scientia* is the perfection of human beings, the fulfillment

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[53] For Aquinas's conception, cf. A. Zimmermann, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik? Die Diskussion über den Gegenstand der Metaphysik im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert: Texte und Untersuchungen*, Leuven 1998 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales. Bibliotheca, 1), pp. 207–222. J. Doig, *Aquinas on Metaphysics. A historico-doctrinal Study of the Commentary on the Metaphysics*, The Hague 1972. J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, Paris 1990, pp. 21–24. J. F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas. From Finite Being to Uncreated Being*, Washington, D.C., 2000 (Monographs of the Society for Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy, 1), pp. 11–22. S. L. Brock (ed.), *Tommaso d'Aquino e l'oggetto della metafisica*, Roma 2004 (Studi Filosofia, 29).

[54] Aquinas's *Prooemium* has been analyzed by M. Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, Frankfurt am Main 1983 (Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 29/30), pp. 69–77. On the serious deficiencies of this analysis, cf. J. F. Courtine, "Heidegger et Thomas d'Aquin", in: C. Esposito / P. Porro (eds.), *Heidegger e I Medievali (Atti del Colloquio Internazionale Cassino 10/13 Maggio 2000)*, Bari 2001 (Quaestio, 1), pp. 213–233.

[55] Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaphysicorum*, prooem. (ed. Cathala, p. 1): "Quando aliqua plura ordinantur ad unum, oportet unum eorum esse regulans, sive regens, et alia regulata, sive recta. (…) Omnes autem scientiae et artes ordinantur in unum, scilicet ad hominis perfectionem, quae est eius beatitudo. Unde necesse est, quod una earum sit aliarum omnium rectrix".

of their natural desire to know. The first and directing science must be the science that is "most intellectual", that is, the one that treats the "most intelligibles" (*maxime intelligibilia*).[56] What is meant by this phrase is explained by Thomas from the features of intellectual knowledge. Intelligibility and that which is "most intelligible" can be understood in three ways.

(i) The first way is taken from the order of understanding (*ex ordine intelligendi*). Here intelligibility relates to causality, since the intellect derives its certainty from the knowledge of causes. "To know scientifically" (*scire*) is, according to Aristotle in his *Posterior Analytics* (I, c. 2), to have perfect knowledge of the cause. Therefore, that science is the highest which considers the first causes.[57]

(ii) In another way, "most intelligibles" can be understood by the comparison of intellect to sense (*ex comparatione intellectus ad sensum*). From this viewpoint intelligibility relates to universality, for the difference between intellect and sense is that sense knowledge is cognition of particulars, while the intellect comprehends universals. Hence, that science is pre-eminently intellectual which deals with the most universal principles. "These are being (*ens*) and that which is consequent upon being (*ea quae consequuntur ens*), such as one and many, potency and act".[58] In this way Aquinas connects First Philosophy with the doctrine of the transcendentals, for the phrase "being and that which is consequent upon it" clearly refers to these notions—in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, he had used a similar terminology. Thomas adds a remark underlining the need for the study of these *communia*: "Principles of this kind should not remain completely indeterminate, because without them it is impossible to have full knowledge of what is

[56] *Ibid.*: "(…) ita scientia debet esse naturaliter aliarum regulatrix, quae maxime intellectualis est. Haec autem est, quae circa maxime intelligibilia versatur".

[57] *Ibid.*: "Maxime autem intelligibilia tripliciter assumere possumus. Primo ex ordine intelligendi. Nam ex quibus intellectus certitudinem accipit, videntur esse intelligibilia magis. Unde, cum certitudo scientiae per intellectum acquiratur ex causis, causarum cognitio maxime intellectualis esse videtur. Unde et illa scientia, quae primas causas considerat, videtur esse maxime aliarum regulatrix".

[58] *Ibid.*: "Secundo ex comparatione intellectus ad sensum. Nam, cum sensus sit cognitio particularium, intellectus per hoc ab ipso differre videtur, quod universalia comprehendit. Unde et illa scientia maxime est intellectualis, quae circa principia maxime universalia versatur. Quae quidem sunt ens, et ea quae consequuntur ens, ut unum et multa, potentia et actus".

proper to any genus or species". They should therefore not be studied in any particular science, but in one *scientia communis*.[59]

(iii) "Most intelligibles" can finally be understood "from the cognition of the intellect" (*ex ipsa cognitione intellectus*). From this viewpoint intelligibility relates to immateriality, for something has the power of intellect by virtue of being free from matter. "The most intelligibles" are therefore things which are altogether free from matter, such as God and the intelligences.[60]

At this point of his *Prooemium* Thomas has identified three different classes of "most intelligible" objects. Philosophically, they correspond to the three different descriptions of First Philosophy, presented in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: it is knowledge of the highest causes (book I); it investigates being as being (book IV); and considers the immaterial and divine being (book VI). Historically, Aquinas's threefold distinction is reminiscent of Avicenna's and Albert the Great's discussions of the proper subject of metaphysics, in which they took three candidates into consideration: God, the highest causes and being as being. Yet whereas they simply claim that these candidates correspond to three different views, Thomas advances their connection by presenting them as three aspects of what is "most intelligible"; his approach is more synthetic.

On the basis of the structure of science, he argues that the threefold consideration of "the most intelligibles" should not be attributed to different sciences, but to one. For the immaterial substances (type iii) are the first and universal causes (type i) of being (type ii). Now it belongs to one and the same science to consider the proper causes of any genus and that genus itself. So it must belong to one and the same science to consider the separate substances and being in general (*ens commune*), which is the genus of which these substances are the common and universal causes[61]—the term "genus" should not be taken literally, for

[59] *Ibid.*: "Huiusmodi autem non debent omnino indeterminata remanere, cum sine his completa cognitio de his, quae sunt propria alicui generi vel speciei, haberi non possit. Nec iterum in una aliqua particulari scientia tractari debent: quia cum his unumquodque genus entium ad sui cognitionem indigeat, pari ratione in qualibet particulari scientia tractarentur. Unde restat quod in una communi scientia huiusmodi tractentur".

[60] *Ibid.*: "Tertio, ex ipsa cognitione intellectus. Nam cum unaquaeque res ex hoc ipso vim intellectivam habeat, quod est a materia immunis, oportet illa esse maxime intelligibilia, quae sunt maxime a materia separata (…), sicut Deus et intelligentiae".

[61] *Ibid.* (pp. 1–2): "Haec autem triplex consideratio, non diversis, sed uni scientiae attribui debet. Nam praedictae substantiae separatae sunt universales et primae causae

"being" is not a genus, but is meant in the sense of "subject genus" of a science.

Aquinas's next step in establishing the unity of First Philosophy is the determination of the proper "subject" of this science; his procedure again confirms that this issue was "the basic question" in medieval metaphysics. He observes that, although this science is concerned with the first causes, with being in general, and with the immaterial substances, it does not study any one of these three as its subject, but only *ens commune*. Thomas again appeals to the general structure of a science: "For the subject of a science is that whose causes and properties we seek, but not the causes themselves".[62] God is not the proper subject of metaphysics, but rather the end of its inquiry.

At the end of the prologue Aquinas explains the names given to this science—'divine science' or 'theology', 'First Philosophy' and 'metaphysics'—on the basis of the three types of "the most intelligibles". It is significant that he reserves the last name for the study of the *communia* and gives a methodological reason for this reservation. This science is called "metaphysics", "insofar as it considers being and what follows upon it, for these *transphysica* are discovered in the process of resolution (*in via resolutionis*) as the more common after the less common".[63] Thomas interprets the *trans-physica* to which "metaphysics" refers, not as "super-natural", but as what is most common, "trans-cendental" one could say. It is discovered through the method of *resolutio*, the method that dominates his approach to the transcendentals in the first article of *De veritate*.

In his commentary on *De trinitate*, Thomas's concern is to distance himself from Boethius's theological conception of metaphysics (see ch. 2.1) and to clarify the difference between two kinds of theology (*theologia sive scientia divina est duplex*), philosophical theology, which

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essendi. Eiusdem autem scientiae est considerare causas proprias alicuius generis et genus ipsum (…). Unde oportet quod ad eamdem scientiam pertineat considerare substantias separatas, et ens commune, quod est genus, cuius sunt praedictae substantiae communes et universales causae".

[62] *Ibid.* (p. 2): "Ex quo apparet, quod quamvis ista scientia praedicta tria consideret, non tamen considerat quodlibet eorum ut subiectum, sed ipsum solum ens commune. Hoc enim est subiectum in scientia, cuius causas et passiones quaerimus, non autem ipsae causae alicuius generis quaesiti. Nam cognitio causarum alicuis generis, est finis ad quem consideratio scientiae pertingit".

[63] *Ibid.*: "[Dicitur] Metaphysica, in quantum considerat ens et ea quae consequuntur ipsum. Haec enim transphysica inveniuntur in via resolutionis, sicut magis communia post minus communia".

is also called "metaphysics", and "the theology of sacred scripture" or Christian theology. Aquinas concludes that these sciences differ from one another, not only through the sources of their knowledge, but also because of their "subjects". In philosophical theology the divine is not the subject—this is being as such—, but the *principle* of this subject. Christian theology, on the other hand, considers the divine in itself as the subject of its science.[64]

"The common science"

1. From his exposition in the *Prooemium* of the *Metaphysics* commentary it is evident that Aquinas's conception of metaphysics is based on the ontological determination of First Philosophy in book IV of the *Metaphysics*. His commentary on this book is instructive for the structure of this science and the metaphysical embedding of the transcendentals.[65] It arranges the issues discussed in *Metaph.* IV according to a threefold structure—namely the *subiectum*, the *passiones subiecti* and the *principia subiecti*—that Aristotle in the *Posterior Analytics* (I, c. 7 and 10) considers as constitutive for every demonstrative science. The first element, the subject-genus (lect. 1), is established as *ens commune* or being as such; metaphysics is the *scientia communis*.[66] The second element are the properties or "*per se* accidents" that are demonstrated of the subject (lect. 2–4), such as the *communia* "one" and "many". The third element (lect. 5 ff.) are the principles from which the demonstration proceeds (for Aquinas's interpretation of the first principle of demonstration, see 6.3.1). From the perspective of the theory of science the relation of "being" to the other transcendentals

[64] Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De trinitate*, q. 5, a. 4 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. L, p. 154): "unde et huiusmodi res diuine non tractantur a philosophis nisi prout sunt rerum omnium principia, et ideo pertractantur in illa doctrina in qua ponuntur ea que sunt communia omnibus entibus, que habet subiectum ens inquantum est ens. Et hec scientia apud eos scientia diuina dicitur. (…) una [*scil.* theologia] in qua considerantur res diuine non tamquam subiectum scientie, set tamquam principia subiecti, et talis est theologia quam philosophi prosequntur, que alio nomine metaphisica dicitur; alia uero que ipsas res diuinas considerat propter se ipsas ut subiectum scientie, et hec est theologia que in sacra Scriptura traditur".

[65] For the following, cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Die Lehre der Transzendentalien und die Metaphysik. Der Kommentar von Thomas von Aquin zum IV. Buch der *Metaphysica*", in: *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 35 (1988), pp. 293–316.

[66] Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Metaphysicorum*, lect. 1, n. 532 (ed. Cathala, p. 151): "Scientia autem communis considerat universale ens secundum quod ens".

can be expressed in terms of the relation of the "subject" to its *per se* accidents.

However, the application of the notion of *per se* accidents to "being" introduces the problem of the "addition" to being, which was central to Aquinas's account of the transcendentals in *De veritate*. In the technical language of Scholastic philosophy, a *per se* accident is predicated of the subject according to the second *modus dicendi per se*. This mode means that, although the predicate is said *per se* of the subject, that is, inseparately and necessarily, it does not belong to the essence of the subject. The standard example is the property "ability to laugh" (*risibile*) predicated of "man", which property adds something real to the subject. But the account in *De veritate* has made it clear that this model is not adequate to conceive the addition of the other transcendentals to "being"; nothing can be added to "being" that is extrinsic to it. It turns out that the structure of Aristotelian science cannot simply be applied to the study of the transcendental properties of being. Thomas does not, however, discuss this tension.

2. Aquinas agrees with Avicenna that the subject of metaphysics is not God, but being as being or *ens commune*. Yet the expression "common being" does not have the same meaning for both authors, since Aquinas's view on the relation of God to the subject of First Philosophy is different from that of the Arab philosopher.[67] Avicenna maintained (see ch. 2.4.1) that metaphysics does not inquire into the principle or cause of being as being, for being as such has no principles. Metaphysics seeks the principles of *some* beings. Aquinas, however, denies that God falls under being as being. On the basis of the argument that metaphysics, like every science, seeks the causes of its subject, he interprets the relation of God to *ens commune* as a causal relation. *Ens commune*, he explicitly states, is the proper effect of the highest cause, God. He is not part of the subject, but "God is the cause of being qua being (*ens inquantum ens*)".[68]

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[67] Cf. J. F. Wippel, "The Latin Avicenna as a Source of Thomas Aquinas's Metaphysics", in: *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 37 (1990), pp. 51–90, in particular pp. 58–59.

[68] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I–II, q. 66, a. 5 ad 4 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. VI, Rome 1891, p. 436): "ens commune est proprius effectus causae altissima, scilicet Dei". Cf. *In VI Metaphysicorum*, lect. 3, n. 1220 (ed. Cathala, p. 308): "(…) ens inquantum ens est, habet causam ipsum Deum"; *ibid.*, n. 1222 (p. 308):

The onto-theological structure of the "common science" finds expression in Thomas's distinction between two kinds of commonness. Considering what is common (*communia*) to all beings, he distinguishes commonness by predication and commonness by causality.[69] The first type is applicable to the subject of metaphysics, *ens commune*; the other is applicable to God, whose causality extends to all that is. The divine is considered in metaphysics, insofar as it is the universal cause of being. Between the two kinds of *communia* there is a cognitive discrepancy. What is common by predication is first known to us—"being" is the first conception of the intellect; what is common by causality is later known to us, although it is ontologically prior.[70] The distinction of two types of commonness is linked with the difference between the cognitive first, the subject of the *scientia communis*, and the ontological first, whose knowledge is the end of metaphysics.

Aquinas's understanding of metaphysics as "the common science", which unites the predicative commonness of transcendental being with the causal commonness of God, at the same time connects the commonness of the transcendentals with the Platonic view of the commonness of the first principle. As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, Aquinas, in his commentary on *De causis*, describes the Platonic conception of the first by the features "what is most general", "what is most separate" and "the cause of all that is posterior". Eustratius of Nicea, in his critique of Aristotle's critique of Plato's Idea of the Good, had introduced the commonness by causality as a typical element of Plato's doctrine, which was completely misunderstood by

"Quod autem sit necessario vel contingenter, dependet ex causa altiori, quae est causa entis inquantum est ens"; *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 16 ad 4; *De veritate*, q. 10, a. 12 ad 10 (*in contrarium*) (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXII/2, Rome 1972, p. 343): "Nec potest esse quod nullus eius [*sc.* Dei] effectus cognoscatur cum eius effectus sit ens commune quod incognitum esse non potest".

[69] Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De trinitate*, q. 5, a. 4 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. L, p. 153): "Que quidem principia possunt dici communia dupliciter secundum Avicennam (…): uno modo per predicationem (…); alio modo per causalitatem (…). Omnium autem entium sunt principia communia non solum secundum primum modum (…), set etiam secundum modum secundum".

[70] Thomas Aquinas, *In I Metaphysicorum*, lect. 2, n. 46 (ed. Cathala, pp. 13–14): "Sed dicendum, quod magis universalia secundum simplicem apprehensionem sunt primo nota, nam primo in intellectu cadit ens (…). Ea autem quae sunt universalia in causando, sunt posterius nota quo ad nos, licet sint prius nota secundum naturam, quamvis universalia per praedicationem sint aliquo modo prius quo ad nos nota quam minus universalia". Cf. *De veritate*, q. 10, a. 11 ad 12.

Aristotle (see ch. 2.3.2). By relating the predicative commonness of the primary notions to the causal commonness of God, Aquinas indicates that Platonism is not in opposition to the transcendental view, but complementary.

Being as being and the idea of creation

A concrete illustration of Aquinas's conception of metaphysics is provided by a remarkable text in the *Summa theologiae* (I, q. 44, a. 2), in which he describes the historical progress of philosophy with respect to the question of being.[71] According to Aquinas's reading three main phases can be distinguished in this history. The first philosophers, the pre-Socratics, asserted that all forms are accidents and that the substance of things is only matter. They posited one or more primary substance-materials, which they regarded as having no genesis (origin) and as incorruptible. The consequence of this "materialistic" way of thought was that—to the extent it acknowledged any change in the primary substance—such a change can only be accidental; coming-to-be is nothing other than an accidental transformation of a permanent substance, an "alteration" (*alteratio*). The second stage in the history of the question of being was reached when form was no longer regarded as accidental in things, but as substantial. The composition of form and matter makes it possible to acknowledge essential changes in things, the coming-to-be of substances (*generatio*). But Thomas emphasizes that the "formal" way of thought cannot be the last phase in the reflection on the origin of things. The philosophers of the first and second stages considered being under some particular aspect, namely, either as "such" being (*tale ens*) or as "this" being (*hoc ens*). As a result, the causes to which they attributed the coming-to-be of things were particular causes.[72]

The third and final phase in the human reflection on the origin of things began when "some thinkers" (*aliqui*) raised themselves to the consideration of being as being (*ens inquantum est ens*). These phi-

[71] For a more detailed analysis of this text, J. A. Aertsen, "La scoperta dell'ente in quanto ente", in: S. L. Brock (ed.), *Tommaso d'Aquino e l'oggetto della metafisica*, Roma 2004 (Studi di Filosofia, 29), pp. 35–48.

[72] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 44, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. IV, p. 458): "Utrique igitur consideraverunt ens particulari quadam consideratione, vel inquantum est *hoc ens*, vel inquantum est *tale ens*. Et sic rebus causas agentes particulares assignaverunt".

losophers considered a causality of things, insofar as they are beings (*entia*)—and not only, insofar as they are "these" beings or "such" beings. They were therefore the only ones who have posited a universal cause of being and an origin that no longer presupposes anything in that which is caused, that is, *creatio* (*ex nihilo*).[73] The idea of creation appears as the terminus of the *philosophical* search for the origin of things.

Aquinas's account of the causal relation of God to the subject of metaphysics implies that, just as in Albert the Great, *ens commune* refers solely to *created* being and that the commonness of what is transcendental is confined to finite being.[74] In Aquinas's concept of *transcendens*, the commonness of what is transcendental does not include God; the transcendental is grounded in the transcendent.[75]

6.3 Transcendentals and the foundations of knowledge

In his account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, Aquinas adopts Avicenna's argument for the necessity of primary notions. The argument rests on an analogy between the order of demonstration and the conceptual order. Just as propositions, so the conceptions of the human intellect must be reduced to principles known *per se*. But in later writings, Aquinas goes a step further in comparison with both Avicenna and his own account in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1. There is not

[73] *Ibid.*: "Et ulterius aliqui erexerunt se ad considerandum ens inquantum est ens: et consideraverunt causam rerum, non solum secundum quod sunt *haec* vel *talia*, sed secundum quod sunt *entia*. Hoc igitur quod est causa rerum inquantum sunt entia, oportet esse causam rerum, non solum secundum quod sunt *talia* per formas accidentales, nec secundum quod sunt *haec* per formas substantiales, sed etiam secundum omne illud quod pertinet ad esse illorum quocumque modo".

[74] Cf. the "adnotation" of Duns Scotus in his *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum*, I, q. 1, (ed. The Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera philosophica*, Vol. III, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997, p. 15), in which he refers to a view, which is in fact that of Aquinas: "Nota quod, secundum communiter loquentes, ens est hic subiectum in quantum est commune ad decem praedicamenta, et non in quantum est commune ad omne ens (…). Intelligitur ergo de ente creato".

[75] S. D. Dumont, in an interesting essay "Scotus's Doctrine of Univocity and the Medieval Tradition of Metaphysics", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, Berlin-New York 1998 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 26), pp. 193–212, and in particular p. 203, holds that Aquinas's conception "seemed open to the devastating criticism that metaphysics could only reach the highest causes by exceeding the boundaries of its own subject". But this objection argues from another conception of metaphysics. Aquinas could reply that his conception is perfectly consistent with the (Aristotelian) principle that every science seeks the causes of its subject.

only an analogy between both orders, but also a relation of foundation: that which is first in the order of concepts founds that which is first in the order of propositions. This "foundational" aspect of the transcendentals, an original element of Aquinas's doctrine, will be analyzed in the present section.

6.3.1 *Foundation of theoretical knowledge: "Being"*

The central moment in the search for foundation is the idea of a continuing *reductio* in addition to Aristotle's reduction of *scientia* to principles *per se nota* and Avicenna's reduction of our concepts to primary notions: self-evident principles must be reduced to the terms of which they are composed. This idea was inspired by Boethius's work *De hebdomadibus*, on which Aquinas wrote a commentary. He was not only interested in the metaphysical problem of this treatise, the relation between being and goodness, but also in its methodology.

In *De hebdomadibus*, Boethius puts forward nine axioms, of which the first one provides a general description of the cognitive status of these axioms: "a common conception of the soul (*communis animi conceptio*) is a statement that anyone approves as he hears it". Boethius adds that these conceptions are of two kinds. One is common in that all men possess it, as, for instance, the proposition "If you take equals from two equals, the remainders are equal" (= the third axiom in Euclid's *Elements*). The other kind of common conception is known only to the learned, as "Things which are incorporeal are not in space".[76]

In his commentary, Aquinas identifies the Boethian *communis conceptio animi* with the Aristotelian *principium per se notum*.[77] What is also noteworthy is the way in which he interprets Boethius's distinction between the two kinds of "common conceptions". The distinction can be explained by the terms of which such propositions are composed.

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[76] Boethius, *De hebdomadibus* (ed. C. Moreschini, in: *De Consolatione Philosophiae—Opuscula Theologica*, Leipzig 2000 (Bibliotheca Teubneriana), p. 187): "Ut igitur in mathematica fieri solet ceterisque etiam disciplinis, praeposui terminos regulasque quibus cuncta quae sequuntur efficiam. (I) Communis animi conceptio est enuntiatio, quam quisque probat auditam. Harum duplex modus est. Nam una ita communis est, ut omnium sit hominum (…) Alia vero est doctorum tantum, quae tamen ex talibus communis animi conceptionibus venit".

[77] Cf. L. F. Tuninetti, *'Per se notum'. Die logische Beschaffenheit des Selbstverständlichen im Denken des Thomas von Aquin*, Leiden – New York – Köln 1996 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 47), p. 19.

A principle *per se notum* is a proposition whose predicate is included in the essence of the subject. Universally self-evident are therefore propositions that use terms understood by all human beings. That which falls in every intellect is what is most general (*maxime communia*), as "being", "one" and "good".[78] Aquinas reduces Boethius's first kind of "common conceptions" to the transcendental terms, which are the first conceptions, because they are the *communissima*. He names "being", "one" and "good", since through these three notions he is able to give a depth structure to Boethius's axioms.

A similar idea underlies Aquinas's reflections in his *Metaphysics* commentary on the foundation of theoretical knowledge in general. In the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle states three conditions of the first and firmest principle of demonstration that "everyone, who wants to know something of that which is, must possess": No one can be mistaken or be in error regarding this principle; it must not presuppose anything—Aristotle employs the phrase *anhypotheton* that Plato attributed to the Idea of the Good—, but must be self-evident; and, finally, it is not acquired by demonstration. These conditions are met by the principle of contradiction: "the same thing cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same thing in the same respect".[79] The fact that those making demonstrations reduce all their arguments to this axiom as the ultimate one in the analysis (*resolvendo*) shows that this principle does not presuppose anything.[80] This axiom Aquinas had in mind, when in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, he stated that in demonstrable matters a reduction must be made to self-evident principles.

In his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Aquinas goes far beyond the *littera* of the text and gives Aristotle's *anhypotheton* a philosophical foundation. His argument is a different version of the reduction of propositions to the knowledge of concepts. Aquinas's point of

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[78] Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio libri De ebdomadibus*, lect. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. L, p. 270): "ille propositiones sunt maxime note que utuntur terminis quos omnes intelligunt; ea autem que in intellectu omnium cadunt sunt maxime communia, que sunt ens, unum et bonum".

[79] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV, c. 3, 1005b 14–20. Cf. K. H. Volkmann-Schluck, "Der Satz vom Widerspruch als Anfang der Philosophie", in: G. Neske (ed.), *Durchblicke (Festschrift zum 70 Geburtstag M. Heidegger)*, Pfullingen 1959, pp. 134–150.

[80] Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Metaphysicorum*, lect. 6, nn. 603–604 (ed. Cathala, p. 167): "Et propter hoc omnes demonstrationes reducunt suas propositiones in hanc propositionem, sicut in ultimam opinionem omnibus communem: ipsa enim est naturaliter principium et dignitas omnium dignitatum (…) inquantum in hanc reducunt demonstrantes omnia, sicut in ultimum resolvendo".

departure is the Aristotelian view (*De anima* III, c. 6) that the intellect has two operations. The first is the operation by which the intellect knows "what something is", the other the operation by which it composes and divides, that is, by which it forms affirmative and negative propositions. In both operations there is something first. In the first operation the first that the intellect conceives is "being"—nothing can be conceived by the mind unless "being" is understood. The principle "it is impossible for a thing to be and not to be at the same time" depends (*dependet*) on the understanding of "being" and is therefore by nature the first in the second operation of the intellect.[81]

Aquinas gives what we might call a "transcendental" foundation to the first principle of demonstration as the beginning of theoretical science—he himself uses the term *fundatur* in *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 94, a. 2. He grounds the Aristotelian *anhypotheton* on "being" as the first conception of the intellect. Its implication is that the consideration of this principle belongs to metaphysics, since it is the office of this science to consider being as such and its properties.[82]

6.3.2 *Foundation of practical knowledge: "The good"*

Aquinas gives a "transcendental" foundation not only to theoretical knowledge, but also to practical knowledge. It is an idea without precedent in Aristotle and an original element in Aquinas's ethics. In the

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[81] *Ibid.*, n. 605 (pp. 167–168): "Ad huius autem evidentiam sciendum est, quod, cum duplex sit operatio intellectus: una, qua cognoscit quod quid est (…); alia, qua componit et dividit: in utroque est aliquod primum: in prima quidem operatione est aliquod primum, quod cadit in conceptione intellectus, scilicet hoc quod dico ens; nec aliquid hac operatione potest mente concipi, nisi intelligatur ens. Et quia hoc principium, impossibile est esse et non esse simul, dependet ex intellectu entis, (…) ideo hoc etiam principium est naturaliter primum in secunda operatione intellectus, scilicet componentis et dividentis". Cf. R. Imbach, "*Primum principium*. Anmerkungen zum Wandel in der Auslegung der Bedeutung und Funktion des Satzes vom zu vermeidenden Widerspruch bei Thomas von Aquin, Nikolaus von Autrecourt, Heymericus de Campo und Nikolaus von Kues", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, Berlin – New York 2003 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 30), pp. 600–616.

[82] Thomas Aquinas, *In I Posteriora Analytica*, lect. 5 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. I*/2, Rome 1989, p. 25): "sciendum est quod quelibet propositio cuius predicatum est in ratione subiecti est inmediata et per se nota, quantum est in se. Sed quarundam propositionum termini sunt tales quod sunt in noticia omnium, sicut ens et unum et alia que sunt entis in quantum ens: nam ens est prima conceptio intellectus (…) Unde et huiusmodi principia omnes sciencie accipiunt a metaphisica, cuius est considerare ens simpliciter et ea que sunt entis".

second part of the *Summa theologiae* that is concerned with "a moral consideration of human acts" (q. 6, prol.), Aquinas develops a structure for practical science that is analogous to that of theoretical science. The argument is presented in a famous article, q. 94, a. 2, that contains the classic doctrine of natural law (*lex naturalis*) and belongs to the most discussed texts in the *Summa*.[83] Aquinas's foundation of practical reason, however, is not an aspect of this doctrine that usually comes to the fore in the discussions about natural law. His argument proves to be a synthesis of the different moments that played a role in his foundation of theoretical thought.

(i) The starting point of Thomas's exposition is an analogy of proportionality between theoretical and practical reason that concerns their relation to first principles. He takes for granted that the first principles of practical reason are identical with the first precepts of natural law. "The precepts of natural law are to practical reason as the first principles of demonstrations are to theoretical reason, for both are self-evident principles (*principia per se nota*)".[84] The analogy is indicative both of the structural agreement between theoretical and practical reason and of their difference. Practical and theoretical science have the same formal structure of rationality, insofar as scientific knowledge in both domains has to be reduced to self-evident principles. At the same time, the analogy is an indication of the autonomy of ethics, insofar as practical reason has its own first principles distinct from those of theoretical reason. Just as man possesses a natural *habitus*, the *intellectus principiorum*, through which he knows the theoretical principles,

[83] From the abundant literature, we mention studies that determined the discussions in the English- and German-speaking regions respectively: G. Grisez, "The First Principles of Practical Reason", in: A. Kenny (ed.), *Aquinas. A Collection of Critical Essays*, London 1970, pp. 340–382. Cf. id., "The Structures of Practical Reason: Some Comments and Clarifications", in: *The Thomist* 52 (1988), pp. 269–291. In the German-speaking regions W. Kluxen's studies are authoritative: *Philosophische Ethik bei Thomas von Aquin*, Mainz 1964 [reprinted in Darmstadt ^{3}1998]. A summary offers W. Kluxen, *'Lex naturalis' bei Thomas von Aquin*, Wiesbaden 2001 (Nordrhein-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Vorträge G 378).

[84] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I–II, q. 94, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. VII, p. 169): "praecepta legis naturae hoc modo se habent ad rationem practicam, sicut principia prima demonstrationum se habent ad rationem speculativam: utraque enim sunt quaedam principia per se nota".

so he possesses a natural *habitus* of the first practical principles that is called *synderesis*.[85]

(ii) Aquinas goes on to discuss the nature of the *principia per se nota*, from which both theoretical and practical reason start. With an explicit reference to Boethius's work *De hebdomadibus*, which had distinguished two kinds of "common conceptions of the soul", he introduces a distinction with respect to these principles that is based on their reduction to the terms of which they are composed. Some propositions are self-evident only to the learned, who understand the meaning of the terms of such propositions. Other axioms are universally self-evident, because the terms of these propositions are known to all (*omnibus*).[86] Thus, Thomas enters the domain of the transcendentals by reducing the universally self-evident principles to the first conceptions of the intellect.

(iii) The next part of the argument draws a conclusion from the so far purely formal exposition. Among the most common notions there exists a conceptual order, in which "being" has primacy. That which the intellect first conceives is "being", for its understanding is included in all things whatsoever a human being apprehends. Aquinas establishes a relation of foundation between "being" and the first principle of theoretical reason, which we already know from his commentary on the *Metaphysics*. "Therefore, the first indemonstrable principle, the proposition 'the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time', is founded (*fundatur*) on the notions of "being" and

[85] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/2, p. 504): "Sicut autem animae humanae est quidam habitus naturalis quo principia speculativarum scientiarum cognoscit, quem vocamus 'intellectum principiorum'; ita in ipsa est quidam habitus naturalis primorum principiorum operabilium, quae sunt universalia principia iuris naturalis; qui quidem habitus ad 'synderesim' pertinent". Cf. *Summa theologiae* I, q. 79, a. 12. The origin of the curious term *synderesis* rests on a corrupted transliteration of the Greek word *syneidesis* ("conscience"). For the complex history of the concept, cf. O. D. Lottin, "Syndérèse et conscience aux XII^{e} et XIII^{e} siècles", in: id., *Psychologie et morale aux XII^{e} et XIII^{e} siècles*, Vol. II/1: *Problèmes de morale*, Louvain-Gembloux 1948, pp. 101–349. C. Trottmann, *Vers la contemplation. Etudes sur la syndérèsis et les modalités de la contemplation de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, Paris 2007 (Le savoir de Mantice, 13).

[86] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I–II, q. 94, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. VII, p. 169): "sicut dicit Boetius, in libro *de Hebdomad.*, quaedam sunt dignitates vel propositiones per se notae communiter omnibus: et huiusmodi sunt illae propositiones quarum termini sunt omnibus noti (…). Quaedam vero propositiones sunt per se notae solis sapientibus, qui terminos propositionum intelligunt quid significent".

"not-being"; all other propositions are founded on this principle", the *anhypotheton* of human thought.[87]

(iv) Aquinas then makes the transition to practical reason, a transition that comes along with a change in what is first known: "As 'being' is the first that falls under the apprehension absolutely (*simpliciter*), so 'good' is the first that falls under the apprehension of practical reason". "Good" is the first concept of practical reason, for practical reason is directed to action, and every agent acts for an end, which has the nature of good.[88] He determines the *ratio* of the good in accordance with Aristotle's definition in the *Ethics* as "that which all desire"—the same *ratio* he attaches to *bonum* in his account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1.

The idea of the structural analogy between theoretical and practical reason now enables Aquinas to establish a relation of foundation between the first concept and the first principle of practical reason. The first principle of practical reason is founded on the *ratio* of good. This principle is the first precept of natural law: "Good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided".[89] The first principle of practical reason is marked, just like the principle of contradiction, by an opposition, but has in contrast to the first principle of theoretical reason a *prescriptive* character. The principle "good is to be done" is the first *praeceptum* of natural law, which expresses the normativity of practical reason as such.

"Being" and "good"

Determinative for Aquinas's foundations of theoretical and practical reason are the notions of *ens* and *bonum* respectively. The features of the relation of the latter transcendental to "being" can also shed light

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[87] *Ibid.* (pp. 169–170): "In his autem quae in apprehensione omnium cadunt, quidam ordo invenitur. Nam illud quod primo cadit in apprehensione, est ens, cuius intellectus includitur in omnibus quaecumque quis apprehendit. Et ideo primum principium indemonstrabile est quod *non est simul affirmare et negare*, quod fundatur supra rationem entis et non entis: et super hoc principio omnia alia fundantur, ut dicitur in IV *Metaphys.*".

[88] *Ibid.* (p. 170): "Sicut autem ens est primum quod cadit in apprehensione simpliciter, ita bonum est primum quod cadit in apprehensione practicae rationis, quae ordinatur ad opus: omne enim agens agit propter finem, qui habet rationem boni".

[89] *Ibid.*: "Et ideo primum principium in ratione practica est quod fundatur supra rationem boni, quae est, *Bonum est quod omnia appetunt*. Hoc est ergo primum praeceptum legis, quod *bonum est faciendum et prosequendum, et malum vitandum*".

upon the relation between ethics and metaphysics in Aquinas, which has been controversially interpreted.[90]

First, one has to acknowledge that there is a metaphysics of the good, for the good is a "mode of being". Thomas stresses this aspect when he, in his commentary on the *Ethics*, explains the definition of the "good" presented by Aristotle: "that which all desire". Whereas the Aristotelian context of the definition is the good *for a human being*, Aquinas understands the definition as the determination of the good in a *transcendental* sense by pointing to the convertibility of "good" and "being".[91] In its various aspects—mode of being, object of the will and first concept of practical reason—, the good has an integrating function; it is a common point of reference of ethics and metaphysics. It makes their integration (not: identity) possible, in which Aquinas was more interested than Aristotle.

Although "being" and "good" are convertible, they are not synonyms, since their concepts differ. The "good" presupposes "being", adds something conceptual to it, namely the relation to the appetite, and is last in the order of the transcendentals. This order of the primary notions relativizes Aquinas's analogy of proportionality between theoretical and practical reason, presented as the starting point of his exposition in the *Summa theologiae*. Both domains are not disconnectedly beside one another, but ordered to one another according to a relation of "prior" and "posterior".

The good, the last in the order of the transcendentals, becomes the first in the practical domain. Practical reason, however, considers the *ratio* of the good in another way than theoretical reason or metaphysics does. An interesting reflection clarifies this difference. Aquinas relates the theoretical and practical modes of consideration to the notions *verum* and *bonum* respectively. The true and the good penetrate one another (*circumincedunt*), because the true is a good and every good is something true. Hence theoretical reason can consider the good, albeit

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[90] Cf. the different interpretations in W. Kluxen, "Metaphysik und praktische Vernunft. Über ihre Zuordnung bei Thomas von Aquin", in: L. Oeing-Hanhoff (ed.), *Thomas von Aquin 1274/1974*, München 1974, pp. 73–96; and R. McInerny, *Aquinas on Human Action: A Theory of Practice*, Washington, D.C., 1992, Ch. 10: "Ethics and Metaphysics", pp. 193–206.

[91] Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia Libri Ethicorum*, I, lect. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XLVII/1, p. 5): "Circa quod considerandum est quod bonum numeratur inter prima, adeo quod secundum Platonicos bonum est prius ente, sed secundum rei veritatem bonum cum ente convertitur".

under the aspect of *true*. That is the case, when we define "the good" and show its nature. But practical reason considers the good *as good*, that is, as the end of an action.[92] It is by this mode of considering that the *ratio* of the good is understood in its *practical* character. For this reason, Aquinas can found the first principle of ethics on this notion.

6.4 Transcendentals as "the firsts"

Transcendentals are "the firsts" in a cognitive respect. Thomas adopts Avicenna's teaching of the primary notions of the intellect, but his analysis contains new aspects: the description of the genetic order of these notions (6.4.1); the interpretation of what is first known in terms of the "proper *obiectum* of the intellect" (6.4.2); and the connection of what is first known with the idea of analogy, another structural element of transcendentality in the thirteenth century (6.4.3).

6.4.1 *The genesis of the primary notions*

In *De veritate* q.1, a. 1, Thomas presents the transcendentals according to a systematic ordering. In other texts he describes the order of the primary notions of the intellect from the perspective of their genesis.[93] The aim of this description is to eliminate a seeming circularity in the determination of the *ratio* of "one". If "one" expresses the negation of "multitude", it will be posterior to this notion, but the concept of "multitude", on the other hand, presupposes unity. The genesis of the primary notions, however, reveals that "one" does not depend on the concept of "multitude", but is prior to it. This genesis comprises five steps.

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[92] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 3, a. 3 ad 9 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, p. 109): "verum et bonum se invicem circumincedunt quia et verum est quoddam bonum et bonum omne est quoddam verum: unde et bonum potest considerari cognitione speculativa prout consideratur veritas eius tantum, sicut cum diffinimus bonum et naturam eius ostendimus; potest etiam considerari practice si consideretur ut bonum, hoc autem est si consideretur in quantum est finis motus vel operationis".

[93] Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 7 ad 15 (the most complete text); *In X Metaphysicorum*, lect. 4, n. 1998; *In I Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3 ad 2; *In IV Metaphysicorum*, lect. 3, n. 566; *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 11, a. 2 ad 4. Cf. *Super Boetium De trinitate*, q. 4, a. 1.

(i) That which first "falls into the intellect" is *ens*. Central in Aquinas's accounts of the transcendentals is the claim that "being" is what is first conceived by the intellect.
(ii) Second comes *non ens*, the negation of being. Through the act of being something is distinguished from non-being. As we have seen, Thomas founds the first principle of theoretical reason, the principle of contradiction, on the notions of *ens* and *non ens*.
(iii) Consequent upon these two is the notion of *divisio*. From the fact that "this" being is not "that" being, we apprehend that it is divided from the other (*divisum ab alio*). The transition from the second step (negation of being) to the third (division) does not seem compelling, for division presupposes a moment of alterity that does not simply result from the negation of being. But we have to recall that in Aquinas's account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, "division" is introduced as the first condition of the relational transcendentals. The order of one being to another can be *secundum divisionem*, and this is expressed by the name *aliquid*. "Being" is called *aliquid* insofar as it is divided from other things. The same phrase is used here by Thomas in his description of the third step. The similarity between the formulations is a strong indication that *aliquid* must be incorporated into Thomas's sketch of the genesis of the primary notions. It expresses in a transcendental way the division of one being from another.
(iv) Next there follows the concept of *unum*, because we understand that this being is undivided in itself. "One" signifies "undivided being".
(v) Finally we apprehend *multitudo*, insofar as we understand that "this" being is divided from "that" being, and each one of them is one in itself. "Multitude" is a notion of which Thomas explicitly says that it is transcendental.

In this description the notions "true" and "good" are not included; they were outside the scope of the exposition. However, in another place in his work, in the context of the question which of the two transcendentals "true" and "good" is prior, Thomas completes his account of the genesis of the primary notions. That which the intellect first apprehends is "being" itself, secondly, it apprehends that it understands being, thirdly, it apprehends that it desires being. Hence

the *ratio* of "being" is first, that of "true" second, and that of "good" third, although the good is in things.[94] Nowhere else in his work does Thomas sketch the order of the transcendentals so completely from the perspective of human subjectivity.

6.4.2 *The debate on what is first known and "the proper object" of the intellect*

The question as to the first known (*primum cognitum*) was the subject of fierce debates in the Middle Ages. The debate inflamed with Aquinas, whose position will be examined in two directions: his rejection of the Franciscan view that the *divine* being is the first known, and Duns Scotus's criticism of an opinion he ascribes to Aquinas, namely that the quiddity of a *material* thing is what is first known.

Critique: God is not what is first known

The first stage of the debate on what is first known was Thomas's criticism of the position of Franciscan masters. As we have seen in chapter 4.2, the Franciscan "school" maintained that the priority of being cannot rest on the commonness of "analogous being" but must be taken in a more pregnant sense. The divine being is the first known, since what is prior in the order of knowing is identical with what is prior in the order of being.

Aquinas takes issue with this rival conception in the first question of his commentary on Boethius's *De trinitate*, which is concerned with human knowledge of the divine. In q. 1, a. 3, he raises the question: "Whether God is what is first known by the mind? (*Utrum deus sit primum quod a mente cognoscitur*)". The Leonine edition was not able to identify the opponents to whom Thomas refers by the phrase "some" (*quidam*), but recent studies have made plausible that he must have had his Franciscan colleague Gilbert of Tournai in mind. Gilbert became Bonaventures's successor at the University of Paris in 1257 and

[94] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 16, a. 4 ad 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. IV, p. 211): "secundum hoc est aliquid prius ratione, quod prius cadit in intellectu. Intellectus autem per prius apprehendit ipsum ens; et secundario apprehendit se intelligere ens; et tertio apprehendit se appetere ens. Unde primo est ratio entis, secundo ratio veri, tertio ratio boni, licet bonum sit in rebus".

was thus active at the same institution in the same time as Aquinas.[95] The commentary on Boethius's *De trinitate* dates from his first Parisian regency (1256–1259).

In the first part of his reply, Thomas criticizes two versions of the view that God is the first thing known. He starts by rejecting the opinion, which suggests that the first that the mind knows, even in the present life, is God himself, who is the first truth, through which everything else is known. This opinion is false for several reasons. To begin with, if God's essence were what is first known by the human mind, it would follow that every human being is in the state of happiness, since human beatitude consists in the vision of God's essence. Another objection is based on a feature of what is first known: what the intellect first knows is what the intellect knows most certainly, and consequently, there is no doubt that the intellect understands it. But it is evident that this is not the case in the knowledge of God.[96]

Thomas next criticizes a more refined version of this position. It claims that what we first know in this life is not the divine essence itself, but the influx of its light (*influentia lucis ipsius*). To Thomas's mind this alternative version is also untenable for two reasons. First, the light divinely implanted in man is a *natural* light that constitutes our intellectual faculty. In other words, knowledge of this light is not knowledge of the divine being but of the human being, for this light belongs to the nature of the human species. Secondly, this intellectual light is not the first that the intellect knows because we know it only indirectly, through a reflection on our knowledge of something intelligible. No one understands that he understands unless he understands something intelligible.[97]

In the second part of his reply, Thomas elaborates on his own view. He begins with a clarification of the phrase "first known". The expression can be understood in two different senses. If it is taken according to the order of the different powers of the soul (*ordo potentiarum*), then the singular or sensible (*singulare vel sensibile*) is what is first known. What is knowable by the senses is known to us prior to what

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[95] Cf. W. Goris, "Die Anfänge der Auseinandersetzung um das Ersterkannte im 13. Jahrhundert: Guibert von Tournai, Bonaventura und Thomas von Aquin", in: *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 10 (1999), pp. 355–369.

[96] Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De trinitate*, q. 1, a. 3 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. L, p. 87).

[97] *Ibid.*

is knowable by the intellect, since all the knowledge of our intellect is derived from the senses.[98] But "what is first known" can also be taken according to the order of the different objects in one and the same power (*ordo obiectorum*); in this sense what is first knowable to each power is its "proper object" (*proprium obiectum*).

In order to determine the proper object of the intellect, Aquinas analyzes the nature of this power. The human intellect consists of an active and a passive power that correspond to one another. The object of the passive or possible intellect will be those forms which are made intelligible by the agent intellect. These are forms abstracted from sensible representations or phantasms (*phantasmata*) and forms of this sort are thus first known by our intellect. Among them there exists an order, since forms that are more encompassing first occur to the abstracting intellect. Hence the intellect first knows what is more universal (*magis universalia*). From this Thomas draws the conclusion that God or the immaterial substance, which are intelligible of themselves and not by abstraction, cannot be what is first known. Rather, they are known from other things (*ex aliis*).[99]

In his account Aquinas does not specify the items that are first known in the order of intellectual knowledge nor does he connect them with Avicenna's doctrine of the primary notions, but, in a reply to an objection, he becomes more concrete. The objection argues that what is prior and simpler first occurs to the intellect, for "being" is that which is first known, as Avicenna teaches. For this reason God, who is absolutely first and most simple, is the first in human knowledge. Thomas rejects the validity of this argument that concludes from a priority in being to a priority in the cognitive order. What is first known by us is first in the domain of things abstracted by the intellect from

[98] *Ibid.*: "Et ideo dicendum est quod primo cognitum homini potest accipi dupliciter: aut secundum ordinem diuersarum potentiarum, aut secundum ordinem obiectorum in una potentia. Primo quidem modo, cum cognitio intellectus nostri tota deriuetur a sensu, illud quod est cognoscibile a sensu est prius notum quam illud quod est cognoscibile ab intellectu, scilicet singulare vel sensibile intelligibili".

[99] *Ibid.* (pp. 87–88). Note in particular: "Alio modo, scilicet secundum alium modum cuilibet potentiae est cognoscibile primo suum proprium obiectum. (…) intellectus autem agens non facit intelligibilia formas separatas, que sunt ex se ipsis intelligibiles, set formas quas abstrahit a phantasmatibus; et ideo huiusmodi sunt que primo intellectus noster intelligit. Et inter hec illa sunt priora, que primo intellectui abstraenti occurrunt; hec autem sunt que plura compreendunt (…); et ideo magis uniuersalia sunt primo nota intellectui. (…) Unde patet quod deus et alie substantie separate nullo modo possunt esse prima intellecta, sed intelliguntur ex aliis".

the phantasms, like "being" and "one". It is not necessary that the first known is what is absolutely first, for this is not included in the *ratio* of the proper object of the intellect.[100]

Typical of Thomas's position in the thirteenth-century debate is the rejection of the Franciscan view of a strict parallelism between the cognitive and the ontological order. His main argument is the dependence of human knowledge on sense experience. The first in the order of intelligibles is not that which is first absolutely speaking (*simpliciter*), that is, God, but that which is first "for us", being in general.[101]

An interesting aspect of the discussion in *De trinitate* q. 1, a. 3, is the turn to the "object": Aquinas relates what is first known to the "proper object" of the intellect. Avicenna's idea of primary notions is thus received into a doctrine of the human soul and its faculties or powers. The effect of the turn to the "object" is that the discussion of what is first known acquires a critical function, for the question as to the proper *obiectum* concerns the scope of the intellect.

The proper object of the intellect: Being or the quiddity of a material thing?

1. In a later stage of the debate on what is first known, Aquinas himself was criticized. In the reception of his thought in the early fourteenth century, his position was identified with the view that "the quiddity of a material thing" (*quiditas rei materialis*) is the first or proper object of the intellect. This appears, for instance, from the overview of the different positions in the debate on the *primum obiectum adaequatum* of the intellect given by the Carmelite John Baconthorpe (d. 1345/8). The first opinion he mentions holds that "the quiddity of a material thing" is the first adequate object and is ascribed to Aquinas. Another opinion—the position of Duns Scotus—conceives *ens* (*transcendens*) as this object.[102] The identification of the first opinion with Aquinas's

[100] *Ibid.*, ad 3 (p. 88): "quamuis illa que sunt prima in genere eorum que intellectus abstrait a phantasmatibus sint primo cognita a nobis, ut ens et unum, non tamen oportet quod illa que sunt prima simpliciter, que non continentur in ratione proprii objecti sicut et ista".

[101] Cf. *ibid.*, ad 2 (p. 88): "Vel dicendum quod quamuis Deus sit in ordine intelligibilium primum simpliciter, non tamen est primum in ordine intelligibilium nobis".

[102] John Baconthorpe, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Cremona 1618, pp. 83–87). See ch. 15.3.

position goes back to John Duns Scotus, who critically discusses some texts of Aquinas.

The *Doctor subtilis* regards the view that the quiddity of a material thing is the adequate object of the intellect as completely false and cannot imagine a theologian and philosopher maintaining it (see ch. 9.4.3).[103] His philosophical critique is focused on the fatal consequences of this position for the possibility of metaphysics. A science of being as such would not be possible if the intellect does not transcend the range of the material quiddities and conceive something under a more general aspect than Thomas holds, namely under the aspect of being in general (*ens in communi*). Scotus's critique suggests a disproportion between Aquinas's view of the proper subject of metaphysics and a "transcendental" conception of metaphysics.

Scotus's reading is based on texts in the *Summa theologiae*, in which Aquinas indeed maintains that the proper object of the intellect is the quiddity of the material thing.[104] Yet other texts show a different perspective. In his treatise *De ente et essentia*, for instance, Thomas states in the prologue that "being" and "essence" are what is first conceived by the intellect and that he will proceed from what is ontologically posterior to what is prior, namely, from what is composed (the material being) towards what is simple (the immaterial being).[105] Scotus's interpretation, which suggests that Aquinas's conception is a philosophy of *material* being, is one-sided.

It seems that Aquinas in search of the proper object of the intellect follows two different ways: in some texts (for instance, in *De trinitate* q. 1, a. 3), he follows the way of *abstraction* towards the more universal, in other texts (for instance, in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1), he follows the way of *resolution* to what founds the intelligibility of things because of its actuality, namely "being". So he argues that the first conception of the intellect is "being", because something is knowable insofar as it is

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[103] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, nn. 110–112 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. III, Vatican 1954, pp. 69–70). For a more complete analysis of the controversy between Aquinas and Scotus, cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Aquinas and the Human Desire for Knowledge", in: *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 79 (2005), pp. 411–430.

[104] In the parallel text to his discussion in *De trinitate*, q. 1, a. 3, in *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 88, a. 3, Aquinas explicitly states this view. Cf. also *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 84, a. 7; q. 85, a. 5; q. 89, a. 1.

[105] Thomas Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, prol. (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XLIII, Rome 1976, p 369).

in act. Hence "being" is the proper object (*proprium objectum*) of the intellect and thus the *primum intelligibile*, just as sound is the *primum audibile*.[106] Being is that in virtue of which things are capable of being known by an intellect.

2. Unlike Scotus, Aquinas never devoted a separate *quaestio* to the topic of the proper object of the intellect.[107] Nor does he make an attempt to reconcile his various statements on this subject. Yet scattered in his work we find some clues of his account. A first element is the idea that the "natural" object of the intellect is nothing other than "being" (*ens*). "Therefore, our intellect naturally knows being and that which belongs *per se* to being as such".[108] The formulation of this conclusion unmistakably alludes to the description of the subject-matter of metaphysics. It is also reminiscent of the idea that is central to Aquinas's argument in *De veritate* for the transcendental character of the "true" (*verum*), which expresses the relation of being to the intellect: "the soul is in a sense all things" (*quodammodo omnia*). The human mind is marked by a transcendental openness. It is this "transcendental" aspect of his account—the human intellect naturally knows "being"—that Scotus ignores in his reading.

There is, however, another element in Aquinas's account, and it is this element that is dominant in Scotus's understanding. The transcendental openness of the human mind does not mean that the intellect has immediate access to what is being in the highest degree, the divine. Aquinas's argument in the debate on what is first known draws attention to the dependence of intellectual knowledge on sense experience. More strongly than the *Doctor subtilis* he emphasizes the finitude of the human mode of knowing that is consequent upon the human

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[106] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. IV, p. 58): "illud ergo est prius secundum rationem, quod prius cadit in conceptione intellectus. Primo autem in conceptione intellectus cadit ens: quia secundum hoc unumquodque cognoscibile est quod est actu (…). Unde ens est proprium obiectum intellectus: et sic est primum intelligibile, sicut sonus est primum audibile".

[107] The question has been examined by S. Adamczyk, *De obiecto formali intellectus nostri secundum doctrinam S. Thomae Aquinatis*, Rome ²1955 [1st ed. 1933].

[108] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, II, c. 83 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XIII, p. 523): "Intellectus igitur, cum sit una vis, est eius unum naturale obiectum, cuius per se et naturaliter cognitionem habet. Hoc autem oportet esse id sub quo comprehenduntur omnia ab intellectu cognita (…). Quod non est aliud quam ens. Naturaliter igitur intellectus noster cognoscit ens, et ea quae sunt per se entis inquantum huiusmodi".

mode of being, insofar as the dependence on the phantasms is the natural consequence of the union of body and soul in man.

Instructive for Aquinas's position is a brief text in the *Summa theologiae* in which he asks whether the intellect knows its own act of understanding. One of the objections suggests that this is not the case, since the act of the intellect does not belong to its object.[109] Thomas's general reply, based on the first element in his account—that is, the natural knowledge of the primary notions—, is positive: the intellect is able to know its own act, because the object of the intellect is something common (*commune*), namely "being" and "true"—under which the act of understanding is also contained. But Aquinas adds an important qualification that refers to the second element in his account, the natural dependence on the senses. The intellect cannot know its act primarily (*primo*), "because the first object of our intellect in the present state of life (*status*) is not every being and true, but being and true considered in material things (…); from these it comes to the knowledge of all other things".[110] Aquinas uses the phrase "present state", but this cannot, as in Scotus, refer to man's "fallen" state, since the dependence on sense experience is natural to man. Instead, the expression refers to the present state of the intellective soul in its union with the body, in contrast to the state in which the soul is separated from the body (*anima separata*).

We can draw two conclusions from Thomas's explanation. First, it is correct to say that the object *proportional* to the human intellect, given its dependence upon sense experience, is the quiddity of the material thing. The human intellect first considers being in material substances. In keeping with this idea, Aquinas explicitly states that, among all the sciences, physics (not: metaphysics!) is most in conformity with the human intellect, because in natural science the features of the rational mode of knowing proper to man are particularly observed—namely its dependence on sense experience and its discursiveness (*discursus*),

[109] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 87, a. 3 obj. 1.

[110] *Ibid.*, ad 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. V, p. 361): "obiectum intellectus est commune quoddam, scilicet ens et verum, sub quo comprehenditur etiam ipse actus intelligendi. Unde intellectus potest suum actum cognoscere. Sed non primo: quia nec primum obiectum intellectus nostri, secundum praesentem statum, est quodlibet ens et verum, sed ens et verum consideratum in rebus materialibus (…); ex quibus in cognitionem omnium aliorum devenit".

that is, the gradual progression from one item to another, as from the effect to the cause.[111]

Our second conclusion is that the first conclusion does not imply, as Scotus suggests, that the scope of the human intellect is limited to material being. Its *formal* or *natural* object is "being" in common. On the basis of this view Aquinas argues in the text we just discussed that the intellect can know its own act. Similarly, his claim that physics is the science most in conformity with the human intellect does not mean that metaphysics exceeds the boundaries of reason and is an impossible science for man. In the same *quaestio*, in which Aquinas makes his claim about physics, he accounts for the possibility and structure of metaphysics.[112]

The limits of philosophical knowledge

Aquinas's complex account of human intellectual knowledge becomes apparent in a question in his commentary on Boethius's work *De trinitate*. With regard to Boethius's statement "In divine science we should behold the divine form itself", Thomas asks whether this is possible through a theoretical science.[113] Boethius's claim prompts him to a critical inquiry into the possibility of a philosophical knowledge of God and the limits of theoretical science.

The first part of Aquinas's reply presents the same ideas as his account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1. In the theoretical sciences we always proceed from something previously known (*prius noto*), both in demonstrating propositions and also in finding definitions. It is, however, impossible to go on to infinity in this way. Every inquiry in the theoretical sciences is therefore to be reduced to some "firsts" (*prima*), which man does not have to learn or to discover but which he knows naturally (*naturaliter*). Such are the indemonstrable principles of demonstration and the first conceptions of the intellect, like "being" and "one". In the present text he draws from this argument a conclusion with respect to the scope of philosophical

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[111] Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De trinitate*, q. 6, a. 1 *resp. ad primam quaestionem* (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. L, p. 160): "et ita modus rationis maxime in scientia naturali obseruatur, et propter hoc scientia naturalis inter alias est maxime hominis intellectui conformis".

[112] *Ibid. ad tertiam quaestionem* (pp. 162–163).

[113] *Ibid.*, a. 4 (pp. 169–171): "Utrum hoc possit fieri per viam alicuius scientiae speculative".

knowledge. "From this it is clear that in the theoretical sciences we can know only those things that lie within the range of that which is naturally known".[114] The transcendental notions constitute the horizon of human knowledge.

In the continuation of his argument, Aquinas narrows, however, this broad horizon. Pointing out that the knowledge of the first principles is dependent upon sense experience, he intends to connect the natural knowledge of being with the Aristotelian doctrine of abstraction. The naturally known principles become manifest to man by the light of the agent intellect, which is something natural to him. This light makes things manifest only insofar as the agent intellect exercises its own operation, that is, insofar as it renders phantasms taken from the senses actually intelligible.[115]

The language of Aquinas's explanation is rather metaphorical; what he means seems to be something like this.[116] The first notions, like "being", are not conceived independently from any experience; yet their knowledge is different from that of the other concepts, since they are conceived "by nature". This knowledge is not brought about until the intellect begins to act, that is, until it abstracts the intelligible species from the phantasms of sensible things. The first notions are immediately conceived once the intellect acts upon its objects mediated by sense images. In this sense our knowledge of the first principles is dependent on the senses. Aquinas concludes that this dependence makes a quidditative knowledge of immaterial substances impossible.

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[114] *Ibid.* (p. 170): "in scientiis speculatiuis semper ex aliquo prius noto proceditur, tam in demonstrationibus propositionum, quam etiam in inuentionibus diffinitionum (…) Hic autem non est possibile in infinitum procedere (…); unde omnis consideratio scientiarum speculatiuarum reducitur in aliqua prima, que quidem homo non habet necesse addiscere aut inuenire, ne oporteat in infinitum procedere, set eorum notitiam naturaliter habet. Et huiusmodi sunt principia demonstrationum indemonstrabilia (…) et etiam prime conceptiones intellectus, ut entis, et unius (…). Ex quo patet quod nichil potest sciri in scientiis speculativis (…) nisi ea tantummodo ad que predicta naturaliter cognita se extendunt".

[115] *Ibid.*: "Huiusmodi autem naturaliter cognita homini manifestantur ex ipso lumine intellectus agentis, quod est homini naturale; quo quidem lumine nichil manifestatur nobis nisi in quantum per ipsum phantasmata fiunt intelligibilia in actu: hic enim est actus intellectus agentis (…). Phantasmata autem a sensu accipiuntur, unde principium cognitionis predictorum principiorum est ex sensu et memoria (…); et sic huiusmodi principia non ducunt nos ulterius nisi ad ea quorum cognitionem accipere possumus ex his que sensu compreenduntur".

[116] On the various interpretations of the formation of primary concepts, cf. J. Owens, "Aquinas on Knowing Existence", in: *The Review of Metaphysics* 29 (1975–1976), pp. 670–690. J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, pp. 170–185.

Through sensible things man can arrive at a knowledge of the existence of such substances and of some of their traits, but he cannot know what they are. The divine form or essence cannot, therefore, be contemplated in any theoretical science.[117]

6.4.3 *The first known and analogy:* Praedicatio concreti de abstracto

The notion of analogy does not occur in Aquinas's general accounts of the transcendentals, although it expresses an essential feature of these terms. There is an intrinsic connection between the claims that "being" is not a genus, that it is transcendental and that it is analogically predicable.[118] But in a specific context Thomas points to this feature of transcendentals, even though the phrase "analogy" is not used in the relevant texts—it is the reason that these texts are generally ignored in studies on Aquinas's doctrine of analogy. The context is a rather technical issue: the *praedicatio concreti de abstracto*. In order to explain the validity of this type of predication with respect to transcendental terms, Thomas posits an immediate connection between the cognitive priority of "being" as well as of the other common terms and their analogical mode of predication.

Generally, a concrete term, for instance "white", cannot be predicated of its abstract counterpart, "whiteness". A *concretum* designates a form as it is in a subject and signifies the concrete "that which" (*quod*) is. An *abstractum*, at the other hand, designates a form taken in itself and signifies the formal principle "by which" (*quo*) a subject is what it is. The concrete *quod* cannot be predicated of the abstract *quo*: whiteness is not white, but rather that which makes something white. Yet in the case of transcendental terms, the *praedicatio concreti de abstracto* seems to be correct. An example is the predication *bonitas est bona*, whose validity Thomas discusses within the framework of two different questions.[119]

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[117] Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De trinitate*, q. 6, a. 4 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. L, p. 170).

[118] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *In IX Metaphysicorum*, lect. 1, n. 2170 (ed. Cathala, p. 512): "Est autem veritas, quod unum et ens non sunt genera, sed sunt omnibus communia analogice".

[119] Thomas discusses this kind of predication in four places in his work: *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 4 ad 4 (ed. Commissio Leonina, vol. XXII/3, p. 603); *De virtutibus in communi*,

The first context is the adequacy of Augustine's definition of "virtue": "a good quality (*bona qualitas*) of the mind by which we rightly live". Now "virtue" is "the goodness of man" (*bonitas hominis*), since it makes someone good. Thus the definition implies the validity of the predication *bonitas est bona*. The other context is an objection advanced in the discussion of the question "Whether all things are good by the first goodness?". The goodness by which all things are good is good either by itself or by something else. But if it is good by a goodness other than itself, one gets entangled in an infinite regress, since every form of goodness would be good by another form of goodness. If the form of goodness is good by itself, it must be identical with the first goodness so that the conclusion will be that the goodness of created things is solely founded in the divine goodness. This argument leads Thomas to an analysis of the *praedicatio concreti de abstracto*.[120]

Aquinas's discussion has its historical precedents: it reaches back to the first account of the transcendentals in Philip the Chancellor (see ch. 3.1). In the introductory ninth question of his *Summa de bono*, he deals with what he calls the "reflex predication" *bonitas est bona*. Philip argues that the validity of this predication depends on the distinction between what is the case in "the firsts" (*prima*) and in what is "under the firsts" (*sub primis*). The firsts are the concepts "being", "one", "true" and "good", because they cannot be reduced to something more general; they are the *communissima*, which, in contrast to the less common notions, allow reflex predication.

Aquinas begins his inquiry into the application of the *praedicatio concreti de abstracto* with a similar distinction. We need to distinguish between "special forms" and "general forms". In the case of the "special forms" it is not allowed to predicate a concrete term of its abstract counterpart; we cannot say "whiteness is white". But in the case of the "general forms"—that are also referred to as *transcendentia* in the parallel text in *De virtutibus in communi*—such a predication is allowed; we can say "essence is being" (*essentia est ens*) or "goodness is good". The reason is that "being" is what is first apprehended by the intellect. Hence the intellect attributes "being" to everything it apprehends. The same holds for "that which inseparately follows the *ratio* of being" and

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q. 1, a. 2 ad 8; *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 7 *in contr.*; *Summa theologiae*, I–II, q. 55, a. 4 ad 1. The phrase *praedicatio concreti de abstracto* occurs in the first text.

[120] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 4 obj. 4 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/3, p. 600).

is convertible with it, as "one" and "good": they can be predicated of every general or special abstract form. Typical of the special forms is that they do not inseparately follow the *ratio* of "being". Therefore, we do not apprehend everything under the aspect of "white" and are not compelled to say "whiteness is white".[121]

Thomas adds another difference between "special" and "general" forms. The special, categorial forms are predicated only in one single way, that is, univocally; the general, transcendental forms, on the other hand, are said "in many ways" (*multipliciter*). Something is called "being", because it subsists in itself, or because it is a principle of that which is, or because it is a disposition of that which is, such as a quality. Transcendental terms do not exclusively refer to a *concretum*, to that which is concretely.[122]

Thomas adds this difference in view of his reply to the objection, suggesting that all things are good by the first goodness. The argument falsely assumes that the transcendental term "good" has only one single meaning. The predication *bonitas est bona* does not imply that the formal goodness is something that is good, but the goodness is said to be good in the sense that it is the principle by which something is good. Thus, the real question is not whether the goodness is good by itself or by something else, but whether that which is good by this

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[121] *Ibid.*, ad 4 (p. 603): "aliter se habet in formis generalibus et aliter in formis specialibus. In formis enim specialibus non recipitur praedicatio concreti de abstracto, ut dicatur 'albedo est alba', vel 'calor est calidus' (…). Sed in formis generalibus huiusmodi praedicatio recipitur: dicimus enim quod essentia est ens, et bonitas bona, et unitas una, et sic de aliis. Cuius ratio est quia illud quod primo cadit in apprehensione intellectus est ens, unde oportet quod cuicumque apprehenso per intellectum intellectus attribuat hoc quod est ens. Et ideo cum apprehendit essentiam alicuius entis, dicit illam essentiam esse ens; et similiter unamquamque formam generalem vel specialem, ut bonitas est ens, albedo est ens, et sic de aliis. Et quia quaedam sunt quae concomitantur rationem entis inseparabiliter, ut unum, bonum et huiusmodi, oportet quod haec etiam de quolibet apprehenso praedicentur eadem ratione qua ens; unde dicimus essentia est una et bona, et similiter dicimus unitas est una et bona, et ita etiam de bonitate et albedine et qualibet forma generali vel speciali. Sed album, quia est speciale, non concomitatur inseparabiliter rationem entis; unde potest apprehendi forma albedinis sine hoc quod attribuatur ei esse album, unde non cogimur dicere 'albedo est alba'". Cf. *De vitutibus in communi*, q. un., a. 2 ad 8 (ed. P. A. Odetto, in: *S. Thomae Aquinatis Quaestiones disputatae*, Vol. 2, Turin-Rome 1949, p. 712): "istud [*sc.* "quod praedicatur in abstracto non praedicatur in concreto"] fallit in transcendentibus, quae circumeunt omne ens".

[122] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 4 ad 4 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/3, p. 603).

goodness differs from the goodness itself, as in creatures, or is identical with it, as in God.[123]

Thomas emphasizes the "multiplicity" of "being" and the other first concepts. Yet the transcendental terms are at the same time the most common notions. What is first known is understood under the intelligible aspect (*ratio*) of "being", and this first grasp of reality certainly signifies a *ratio communis*. But Thomas's analysis of the *praedicatio concreti de abstracto* makes clear that the common *ratio* of a transcendental is not like the *ratio* that is signified by univocal terms, since it is not simply one. Its *rationes* are also not totally diverse, as is the case with equivocal terms. Typical of what is first known by the intellect is that it is "analogically" common.[124]

6.5 Transcendentals and the divine

The connection between the transcendentals and the divine was prominent in the medieval doctrine from its very beginning. In the prologue of the *Summa de bono*, Philip the Chancellor establishes that the *communissima* "being", "one", "true" and "good" are sometimes "appropriated", that is, treated as "proper" to God. In the Franciscan *Summa*, attributed to Alexander of Hales, and in the *Summa theologiae* of Albertus Magnus, the discussion of the divine unity, truth and goodness is based on an account of these first notions.

The close connection of the transcendentals with the divine names is also apparent in the work of Thomas Aquinas. An example is his treatment of "the good" in the *Summa theologiae*: in part I, q. 5 he deals with "the good in general" (*De bono in communi*), in q. 6 with "the goodness of God" (*De bonitate Dei*). The most remarkable text is an account of the transcendentals, in which Thomas maintains the priority of "being", "one", "true" and "good" as divine names because of their "commonness" (6.5.1). A metaphysical reason for this priority is given by Thomas in his commentary on the authoritative text concerning the divine names, Dionysius Areopagita's *De divinis nominibus*. In the prologue to this commentary, he wants to justify the Platonic-Dionysian way of thought (6.5.2). Finally, when transcendentals are

[123] *Ibid.*

[124] Cf. R. McInerny, *Studies in Analogy*, The Hague 1968, pp. 2–12 and 61–66 on the *ratio communis analogi*. For Thomas's "theory" of analogy, see 6.5.3.

predicated of God and of creatures, the question arises how this "community" has to be understood. Thomas's answer is that these names are "analogically" common. The essentials of his "theory" of analogy will be set forth (6.5.3).

6.5.1 *Transcendental terms as the primary divine names*

The most striking example of the connection between the transcendentals and the divine names in Thomas's work is the chronologically first account of the transcendentals in his commentary on the *Sentences*, dating from his baccalaureate in Paris (1252–56). The exposition is occasioned by a question concerning the order of the divine names that was a topos in thirteenth-century Scholasticism: "Whether the name 'He who is' (*qui est*) is the first among the divine names?"[125]

Thomas advances three objections to the priority of this name, of which the first two are derived from Dionysius the Areopagite's claim in *De divinis nominibus* that the good (*bonum*) is the primary divine name. That which is prior must be dealt with first. But in his writing, Dionysius deals with the "good" prior to "being". Moreover, what is more common (*communius*) seems to be prior. But the good is more common than being, because it also extends to non-being, which it calls into being. The third objection is based on the doctrine of the transcendentals. When things possess an equal simplicity (*aequalis simplicitas*), one is not prior to the other. That holds for "being", "true", "good" and "one"; they are of an equal simplicity, as appears from their convertibility.[126]

In his reply Thomas ascribes a privileged position to "being", "good", "one" and "true" as divine names. These names precede *simpliciter* the other divine names in the order of understanding, "as it is clear from their commonness (*communitas*)".[127] He does not elaborate on this point, but the reason for the priority of these names is the semantic indeterminacy of the transcendentals. Regardless of how different

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[125] Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 8. q. 1, a. 3 (ed. Mandonnet, pp. 199–201): "Utrum hoc nomen 'qui est' sit primum inter nomina divina".

[126] *Ibid.*, obj. 1–3.

[127] *Ibid.*, a. 3 (p. 199): "Respondeo dicendum, quod ista nomina, ens et bonum, unum et verum, simpliciter secundum rationem intelligendi praecedunt alia divina nomina: quod patet ex eorum communitate".

things may be in what they are because of their categorial determinations, they all have in common that they are beings; as such they bear a likeness to God. In Thomas's view, the less determinate and the more universal names are, the more properly they are said of God.[128]

Next Aquinas sketches the order among the transcendentals, which determines the order among the divine names. "Being", "good", "one" and "true" can be compared with each other in two ways. First, they can be compared *secundum suppositum*: in this respect they are convertible with each other and really identical. But when the transcendentals are compared *secundum intentiones*, "being" is absolutely prior to the others, because without "being" nothing can be understood by the intellect. For this reason, it is fitting that 'being' should be the most proper divine name.[129]

But how can this conclusion be reconciled with the Dionysian priority of the good to which the objections refer? For the integration of this position into the doctrine of the transcendentals Aquinas adopts the same strategy which his teacher Albertus Magnus followed in the treatise *De bono* and in the commentary on *De divinis nominibus*: he proposes a third way of comparing these terms. When the transcendentals are considered according to the *ratio* of causality, then the good is prior to being. The good has the character of a final cause, and the end is the first cause in the order of causality. From this perspective the priority of the good in Dionysius's writing is understandable for he considers the divine names from the aspect of causality.[130]

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[128] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 13, a. 11 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. IV, p. 162): "Et ideo, quanto aliqua nomina sunt minus determinata, et magis communia et absoluta, tanto magis proprie dicuntur de Deo a nobis".

[129] Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3 (ed. Mandonnet, pp. 199–200): "Si autem comparemus ea ad invicem, hoc potest esse dupliciter: vel secundum suppositum; et sic convertuntur ad invicem (…); vel secundum intentiones eorum; et sic simpliciter et absolute ens est prius aliis (…), sine quod nihil potest apprehendi ab intellectu (…); ex quo etiam habet quamdam decentiam ut sit propriissimum divinum nomen".

[130] *Ibid.* (p. 200): "Si autem considerentur secundum rationem causalitatis, sic bonum est prius; quia bonum habet rationem causae finalis (…): finis autem est prima causa in ratione causalitatis". Cf. *ibid.*, ad 1 (p. 200): "Dionysius tractat de divinis nominibus, secundum quod habent rationem causalitatis, prout scilicet manifestantur in participatione creaturarum; et ideo bonum ante existens determinat".

6.5.2 *The legitimacy of the Platonic-Dionysian method of reduction: God as cause of the* maxime communia

"Being", "One", "True" and "Good" are divine names that precede any other name because of their commonness. A more metaphysical reason for the close connection between the transcendentals and the divine is suggested in Thomas's prologue to his commentary on (pseudo-) Dionysius's work *De divinis nominibus*.[131]

The prologue proves that the *corpus dionysiacum* was experienced in the Scholastic world of the thirteenth century as a body of hardly accessible writings. In all the books of Dionysius, Thomas observes, an "obscure" style is used. The principal difficulty is that the Areopagite employs the manner of speaking of the Platonists which has fallen into disuse among modern thinkers (*apud modernos*), that is, among those who are trained in the Aristotelian conceptuality. At the same time, however, the prologue seeks a positive understanding of this authority, insofar as Thomas recognizes the validity of the Platonic method followed by Dionysius. He proceeds to sketch the approach to reality which underlies their way of speaking.

The Platonists want to reduce all that is composed and material to simple and "abstract" principles (*abstracta*). "Abstract" has no cognitive meaning here, but an ontological: the term means "separated" from matter. Thus, the Platonists posit the existence of separate Forms of natural things, for example, Human-Being-in-itself. A concrete individual is not human being by its essence, but by participation in that separate Human Being. This is called "human being *per se*", because it is identical with the human nature or species; from it the human nature in sensible human beings is derived.

The Platonists apply this "abstract" approach not only to the species of natural things but also to that which is most common (*maxime communia*), namely, "good", "one" and "being". They hold that there is a first, which is the essence of goodness, of unity, and of being—a principle that we, Thomas adds, call "God". The other things are called "good", "one" and "being" because of their "derivation" from the first

[131] For the profound influence of *De divinis nominibus* on Thomas's thought, cf. F. A. O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas*, Leiden 1992. T.-D. Humbrecht, *Théologie négative et noms divins chez St. Thomas d'Aquin*, Paris 2005 (Bibliothèque Thomiste, 57).

principle. Therefore the Platonists called the first principle "Good itself", "the Good *per se*", or "the goodness of all good things".[132]

In the next part of the prologue, Thomas rejects the first application of the Platonic method: there are no separate, subsisting Forms of natural things. But with regard to the first principle of things, he recognizes the legitimacy of the Platonist reduction. In this respect their opinion is "the truest" and "in agreement with Christian faith". Therefore, Dionysius sometimes called God "the Good itself", "the supergood", or "the goodness of every good".[133]

Thomas's evaluation of Platonism is mixed. As negative he assesses, like most medieval authors, its conception of the nature of things, subscribing to Aristotle's critique of the doctrine of Forms. The essence or nature of a thing is not a subsisting Form separated from it. The Platonic isomorphism between our abstract mode of knowing and the mode of being of things is a criticism that recurs again and again in Aquinas's writings. He values positively, on the other hand, the Platonic view of the relation of things to the first principle. This principle is transcendent and is goodness and being by its essence. Other things stand in a relation of participation to the first principle; their being and goodness have been derived from the first, divine being.

Thomas advances no argument for the validity of the Platonic method of reduction, but this can only be due to its application to the *maxime communia*, that is, to the transcendental notions. The Platonic approach is valid, insofar as the first principle, God, is regarded as the universal cause of things. The relationship between the transcendentals and the divine is a causal relation, but the *ratio* of this causality is that God himself is Being and Good in an eminent way. He causes being and diffuses goodness, because he is essentially being and good.

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[132] Thomas Aquinas, *In De divinis nominibus expositio*, prooem. (ed. C. Pera, Turin-Rome 1950, pp. 1–2). Note in particular: "Nec solum huiusmodi abstractione Platonici considerabant circa ultimas species rerum naturalium, sed etiam circa maxime communia, quae sunt bonum, unum et ens. Ponebant, enim, unum primum quod est ipsa essentia bonitatis et unitatis et esse, quod dicimus Deum et quod omnia alia dicuntur bona vel una vel entia per derivationem ab illo primo" (p. 2).

[133] Thomas Aquinas, *In De divinis nominibus expositio*, prooem. (ed. Pera, p. 2): "Haec igitur Platonicorum ratio fidei non consonat nec veritati, quantum ad hoc quod continet de speciebus naturalibus separatis, sed quantum ad id quod dicebant de primo rerum Principio, verissima est eorum opinio et fidei christianae consona. Unde Dionysius Deum nominat quandoque ipsum quidem bonum aut superbonum aut principale bonum aut bonitatem omnis boni".

From the prologue of his commentary we can draw the conclusion that Thomas's acceptance of the Platonic-Dionysian method of reduction is in keeping with his conception of metaphysics (see 6.2), which incorporates the "Platonic" kind of commonness by causality and relates the commonness of the subject of this science to the causal commonness of God. The subject of First Philosophy is "common being" (*ens commune*); the divine is considered by metaphysics insofar as it is the cause of the subject or, to use the language of the commentary on *De divinis nominibus*, the cause of the *maxime communia*.

6.5.3 *"Analogical" commonness*

Transcendental names such as "being" and "good" are predicated of God and of creatures and are thus somehow common to them. Like Albertus Magnus, Thomas understands this commonness as an "analogical" unity. In his systematic works he almost exclusively deals with the idea of analogy in the context of divine predication. The "theological" application of this notion was the main motive behind the medieval doctrine. Thomas's reflections on analogy surpass in depth those of his predecessors.[134] Yet these do not occupy so central a place in his writings as in neo-Thomist treatises, which have profusely discussed the issue. One of the reasons for the different focus has been the criticisms of the theory of analogy since the late Middle Ages. Already in the generation after Thomas, the concept of analogy was challenged and became a controversial issue in the theory of the transcendentals by the claim of the "univocity" of being.

A certain evolution can be discerned in Thomas's description of the modes of analogy. We restrict ourselves to his mature position in one of his later works, the *Summa contra Gentiles* (1259/60–1264/5), because the argumentation in this carefully constructed text is most systematic. The account retains the triadic structure of the "topics" of the question as to the relationship between names, concepts and

[134] The literature on Aquinas's doctrine is abundant. We mention B. Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Louvain-Paris 1963; the two studies by R. McInerny: *Logic of Analogy, An Interpretation of St. Thomas*, The Hague 1961, and *Aquinas and Analogy*, Washington, D.C., 1996; J.-F. Courtine, *Inventio analogiae. Métaphysique et ontothéologie*, Paris 2005, pp. 259–282. A well-balanced interpretation of all relevant texts in J. F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 543–572.

things: Thomas successively examines univocal, equivocal and analogical predication as possible answers.[135]

No univocity

Thomas first offers six arguments to show that nothing can be predicated univocally of God and creatures. They all have a similar structure, insofar as they formulate the various conditions of univocity and then infer that the predication of perfections of God and creatures do not meet them. The first argument maintains that specific likeness between the form present in an effect and in its cause is required for the univocal predication of a name of both. But no form caused by God can attain to the species of the divine power itself, for that which creatures receive in divided and partial (*particulariter*) manner is present in God in simple and total (*universaliter*) fashion. The second argument sharpens the condition for univocity mentioned in the first argument: univocal predication also requires that the effect receives the same specific form according to the same mode of being (*modus essendi*) as its cause.[136]

Another argument examines the possible candidates for univocal predication, namely, the five Porphyrian predicables: "Whatever is predicated univocally of different things must be a genus, or species, or difference, or accident, or property". None of these possibilities, however, are suitable for the predication of a name of God and of creatures.[137] Transcendental terms transcend the Porphyrian order of predicables. The presupposition of this argument is, of course, that the list of candidates for univocal predication is exhaustive.

The last argument is based on a negative criterium of univocity: "Whatever is predicated of different things according to priority and posteriority (*secundum prius et posterius*) is certainly not predicated of them univocally". But nothing is predicated of God and other things as though they were in the same order. Everything is said of God essentially—He is called "being" because he is being by his very essence, and is called "good" because he is goodness itself—, whereas predications

[135] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, c. 32–34. The other main treatments are in *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 7 and *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 13, a. 5–6.
[136] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, c. 32.
[137] *Ibid.* (*Adhuc*).

are made of other things by participation.[138] The ontological structure of participation excludes for Thomas the possibility of predicating "being" and "good" univocally of God and creatures.

No equivocity

Next Thomas presents a number of arguments to show that not all names said of God and creatures are purely equivocal, that is, "equivocal by chance". The first argument departs from the principle that in equivocals by chance there is no order or relationship of one thing to another; the attribution of one name to different things is entirely accidental. But this is not the case in names which are predicated of God and creatures, since they imply an order of cause and caused (*ordo causae et causati*).[139]

This causal relationship, the second argument brings out, grounds some kind of likeness (*similitudo*) between creatures and God that renders inadequate any idea of a purely equivocal predication of the divine names.[140] Thomas's argument turns on the principle that "every agent effects something similar to itself". Since God is the cause of being of the creatures, there must be some likeness between them. This causal likeness is the ontological ground for Thomas's rejection of purely equivocal predication.

Another argument has an epistemological nature. When one name is predicated of different things in a purely equivocal manner, we cannot move from our knowledge of one of them to knowledge of the others. We can, however, move from perfections found in other things to some knowledge of God, as the project of the *Summa contra*

[138] *Ibid.* (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XIII, pp. 97–98): "Quod praedicatur de aliquibus secundum prius et posterius, certum est univoce non praedicari (…) Nihil autem de Deo et rebus aliis praedicatur eodem ordine, sed secundum prius et posterius: cum de Deo omnia praedicentur essentialiter, dicitur enim ens quasi ipsa essentia, et bonus quasi ipsa bonitas; de aliis autem praedicationes fiunt per participationem (…). Impossibile est igitur aliquid de Deo et rebus aliis univoce dici".

[139] *Ibid.*, c. 33 (p. 102): "Nam in his quae sunt a casu aequivoca, nullus ordo aut respectus attenditur unius ad alterum, sed omnino per accidens est quod unum nomen diversis rebus attribuitur: non enim nomen impositum uni significat ipsum habere ordinem ad aliud. Sic autem non est de nominibus quae de Deo dicuntur et creaturis. Consideratur enim in huiusmodi nominum communitate ordo causae et causati (…). Non igitur secundum puram aequivocationem aliquid de Deo et rebus aliis praedicatur".

[140] *Ibid.* (*Amplius*).

Gentiles has shown. Once again purely equivocal predication proves to be impossible.[141]

Conclusion: Analogical predication

On the basis of his findings in the previous chapters that names are neither predicated univocally of God and creatures because of the order of priority and posteriority nor purely equivocally because of the likeness of the effect to its cause, Thomas concludes that such names can only be predicated "analogically" of creatures and of God. As he explains, this means that they are said according to an order or relationship to one thing.[142] Thomas's theory of analogy is embedded in a metaphysical doctrine of participation and causality.

Aquinas adds to his conclusion an important distinction concerning "analogy". Due to distinct relationships to one thing analogical predication may happen in two different ways. The first mode is based on the relation of many things to "something else" (*unum alterum*) that is prior to them. For instance, "being" (*ens*) is said of quantity and quality in relation to substance. In the second way, an analogical name is predicated of two things not because they are both related to some third thing, but because one of them is related to the other (*unum ipsorum*). Thus "being" is said of substance and accident because an accident bears a relationship to substance, not because substance and accident are both related to some third thing. The "theological" analogy can only occur according to the second mode, for if names said of God and creatures were predicated analogically according to the first mode, one would have to posit something prior to God.[143]

A characteristic feature of Aquinas's account is his understanding of analogy as a mode of predication (the phrase *analogica praedicatio* is used in *Summa contra Gentiles* I, c. 34), not as a property of concepts, which would become the common interpretation in Thomism. The shift to the concept is understandable, for the conceptual unity is a crucial aspect of the doctrine. As Aquinas more than once observes, in analogical predication, standing midway between univocity and

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[141] *Ibid.* (*Item*).

[142] *Ibid.*, c. 34 (p. 103): "Sic igitur ex dictis relinquitur quod ea quae de Deo et rebus aliis dicuntur, praedicantur neque univoce neque aequivoce, sed analogice: hoc est, secundum ordinem vel respectum ad aliquid unum".

[143] *Ibid.*

equivocity, a transcendental term is said of things according to a *ratio* that is partly the same, partly different. As we have seen in our analysis of Thomas's view of the relation between cognitive priority and analogy (see 6.4.3), he recognizes that the first concept of our intellect, transcendental being, has a *ratio communis*, but this *ratio* is participated in unequally by the analogates. This inequality is articulated in the analogical predication of being: it is said essentially and primarily of God, by participation and secondarily of creatures.

Concluding observations

About thirty years after the beginning of the doctrine in Philip the Chancellor, the medieval theory of the transcendentals acquired a classic formulation in Thomas Aquinas. His systematic account of the transcendental properties of being in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, became an authoritative model in the history of the doctrine. Distinctive of Aquinas's model is his conception of commonness: (i) Transcendental commonness solely extends to created being; the subject of metaphysics is *ens commune*, which does not include God. (ii) The relation of God to *ens commune* is a causal relation. God is common by causality, since he is the cause of the *maxime communia*. (iii) The predicative commonness of terms said of God and creature is analogical. Transcendental terms are predicated of God and creature according to an order of priority and posteriority.

Aquinas's model was influential. An example of its influence is the fourteenth-century writing *Declaratio difficilium terminorum* of Armand of Bellevue, which we analyzed in the first chapter (1.2). The general structure of this work is completely determined by Aquinas's account in *De veritate*—Thomas is for Armand the *Doctor communis*.[144] Aquinas's authority is also manifest in two treatises devoted to the transcendentals, the *Tractatus de sex transcendentibus* of Francis de Prato from the fourteenth century and the *Tractatus de transcendentibus* of Javelli from the sixteenth century. Both treatises attempt to systematize the doctrine on the basis of Aquinas's account. In the *Disputationes metaphysicae*, Suárez explains his position in a permanent discussion with Aquinas's model of transcendentality.

[144] Cf. M. H. Laurent, "Armand de Belvézer et son commentaire sur le *De ente et essential*", in: *Revue Thomiste* 35 (1930), pp. 426–436.

The model of the *Doctor communis* was, however, not the only one in the Middle Ages. Subsequent thinkers would wonder whether transcendental commonness is not to be understood in a more comprehensive manner than Aquinas maintains, for whom *ens commune* refers to finite being. Already in the generation after Aquinas, Henry of Ghent shows a critical attitude to the views of the "Common Doctor" (see ch. VII). The distance from Aquinas's model manifests itself especially in Henry's understanding of the relation of the transcendentals to the divine. Aquinas's views were also critically discussed by representatives of the "German Dominican School", Dietrich of Freiberg and Meister Eckhart (see ch. VIII).

CHAPTER SEVEN

HENRY OF GHENT: THE ONTO-THEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE DOCTRINE

The most important thinker of the last quarter of the thirteenth century was Henry of Ghent, who was regent master in theology at the University of Paris from 1275 until his death in 1293. Because of his long Parisian teaching carrier—unusually long in comparison with the professorships of Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas or Meister Eckhart—he acquired a great magisterial respect.[1] Remarkable in Henry's thought is that, immediately after the death of Aquinas (1274), it breaks new grounds and shows a critical attitude to the views of the *Doctor communis*. Henry twice presents an account of the transcendentals according to the example of Aquinas's expositions in *De veritate*, but does not adopt Thomas's understanding of being. The distance from Aquinas's conception of transcendentality especially manifests itself in two areas: the question as to the conceptual priority of "being" or of "thing", and the relation of the transcendentals to the divine.[2]

7.1 After the example of Thomas Aquinas: Henry's accounts of the transcendentals

Henry's main work is the *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum*; it remained unfinished but was completed by a collection of fifteen *Quodlibeta*. The *Summa* is carefully composed. After extensive prolegomena on scientific knowledge in general (art. 1–5) and on theology

[1] Cf. P. Porro, "Metaphysics and Theology in the Last Quarter of the Thirteenth Century: Henry of Ghent Reconsidered", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer (eds.), *Geistesleben im 13. Jahrhundert*, Berlin – New York 2000 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 27), pp. 265–282.

[2] For Henry's doctrine of the transcendentals, cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Transcendental Thought in Henry of Ghent", in: W. Vanhamel (ed.), *Henry of Ghent. Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of his Death (1293)*, Leuven 1996 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, 1/15), pp. 1–18. M. Pickavé, *Heinrich von Gent über Metaphysik als erste Wissenschaft. Studien zu einem Metaphysikentwurf aus dem letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Leiden – Boston 2007 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 91), pp. 245–306.

in particular (art. 6–20), the first thing to consider is God as the principal subject of this science. Henry argues that because, according to Avicenna, "being" (*esse*) is the first concept in a thing, the first questions will be about God's being and essence (art. 21–24). Because one and being enter the essence of anything and because, again according to Avicenna, they are "immediately impressed in the soul by a first impression", the second topic will be God's unity (art. 25).[3] In this context Henry discusses the first transcendental property "one". It adds to "being" a negative determination, namely, indivision, but "one" in fact expresses a *positio*, that is, something positive, since it signifies "the negation of a negation".[4]

Later on in the *Summa*, in his treatment of the attributes of the divine essence, Henry deals with the "truth of God" (art. 34) and the "goodness of God" (art. 41). Both articles contain a systematic account of the transcendentals. There can be no doubt that in the editing of art. 34, q. 3 and art. 41, q. 1 Henry had Thomas Aquinas's *Quaestiones disputatae De veritate* on his table. Without indicating his source, Henry structures these two questions in the *Summa* according to the expositions in *De veritate* and literally adopts Thomas's formulations.[5] Art. 34, q. 3 on truth corresponds to Aquinas's classic account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, art. 1; art. 41, q. 1 on goodness follows the line of thought in *De veritate* q. 21, art. 1. The comparison of these texts will not only show similarities but also differences between the two thinkers and so reveal distinctive features of Henry's position.[6]

7.1.1 *On truth (and Aquinas's* De veritate *q. 1, a. 1)*

In art. 34, q. 3 of his *Summa*, Henry raises the question "Is truth in God because of his essence *secundum se* and absolutely or from a relation

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[3] Henry of Ghent, *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum*, a. 21, prol. (ed. L. Badius, Paris 1520, Vol. I [reprinted in St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1953], fol. 123r).

[4] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 25, q. 1 (fol. 147rE).

[5] It is a conclusion that contradicts the suggestion of S. P. Marrone, *Truth and Scientific Knowledge in the Thought of Henry of Ghent*, Cambridge, Mass., 1985 (Speculum anniversary monographs, 11), p. 56: "For although it cannot be proved that Henry was drawing on Thomas' work (…)".

[6] For a more complete analysis, cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Heinrich von Gent und Thomas von Aquin über die Transzendentalien. Ein Textvergleich", in: G. Guldentops / C. Steel, *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought. Studies in Memory of Jos Decorte*, Leuven 2003 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, 31), pp. 101–125.

(*respectus*) to his intellect?" He observes that the reply requires a consideration of the proper *ratio* which the term "true" adds to "being" and emphasizes the general import of this question: it holds for both created and uncreated truth.[7] Henry's answer follows the structure and approach in Aquinas's *De veritate* (see ch. 6.1) and thus begins with an "analytics" of intellectual knowledge, that is, with a "reduction" of our concepts to a first one.

The analogy argument: The reduction to a first

THOMAS AQUINAS	HENRY OF GHENT
Dicendum quod sicut in demonstrabilibus oportet fieri reductionem in aliqua principia per se intellectui nota, ita investigando quid est unumquodque; alias utrobique in infinitum iretur, et sic periret omnino scientia et cognitio rerum.	Sciendum quod, sicut in intellectu complexo oportet fieri reductionem in aliquod primum principium complexum omnino intellectui per se notum—aliter enim procederetur in infinitum—, sic in conceptu intellectus incomplexi de eo quod quid est, quod dicitur per nomen quod est propria ratio termini, a qua imponitur ad significandum, oportet omnes huiusmodi conceptus reducere ad aliquem conceptum incomplexum primum et notissimum, in quem omnes alii habent reduci, et qui includitur in omnibus aliis.[8]

Henry adopts from Thomas the analogy between two orders of knowledge, the order of demonstration and that of definition, which he specifies as the "complex intellect" that composes concepts in a sentence and the "incomplex intellect" respectively. The analogy (*sicut… sic*) consists in that in both orders a "reduction" to a first is necessary, which is known *per se* and is therefore *notissimum* (Henry employs an expression, used by Thomas in the next passage). As a departure from his model, Henry speaks of a reduction to a first principle or to a first

[7] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3 (ed. R. Macken, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXVII, Leuven 1991, pp. 189–190): "Ad istam quaestionem oportet respondere aspiciendo ad significatum termini, quae videlicet sit propria ratio quam addit verum super ens. Et potest quaestio ista esse generalis ad veritatem creatam et increatam".

[8] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, pp. 4–5, ll. 95–100); Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3 (ed. Macken, p. 190, ll. 31–38).

concept (in the singular), which actually better complies with the train of thought than a plurality of principles.

The first concept: "Being" (ens)

THOMAS AQUINAS	HENRY OF GHENT
Illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum et in quod omnes conceptiones resolvit est ens, ut Avicenna dicit in principio suae *Metaphysicae*.	Et est iste "conceptus entis in quantum ens est", secundum Avicennam in I° Metaphysicae (…). Et hoc est quod significat certitudinem, qua est unumquodque id quod est in natura et essentia sua absolute, absque omni conditione et additione.[9]

For Henry, just like for Thomas, "being" is the first concept of the intellect. Both thinkers support their claim by a reference to Avicenna's *Metaphysics*. At the same time we find in Henry's text some changes and additions in comparison with Thomas. So Henry determines the first concept of the intellect not only as "being", but as *ens inquantum ens*—a phrase that clearly refers to the "subject" of metaphysics. Another difference concerns Henry's explanation of the *ratio* of being.

Thomas presents this *ratio* later in *De veritate* q. 1, art. 1, when he incorporates the Avicennian notion of *res* into his account of the transcendentals and clarifies the distinction between "being" and "thing": the name *ens* is taken from the "act of being" (*actus essendi*), while the name *res* expresses the quiddity or essence of a being. The phrase "act of being" is typical of Aquinas's understanding of being; his transcendental perspective is determined by the "actuality" of being. According to Henry, however, "being" signifies "the *certitudo* through which everything is that which it is in its nature and essence absolutely". It is striking that he determines the *ratio entis* through the concept *certitudo*, for this is the notion by which Avicenna explains the term *res* (see ch. 2.4.2). "Everything has a *certitudo* through which it is what it is"; the "certitude" of a thing is its whatness (*quidditas*).[10] Henry

[9] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, p. 5, ll. 100–104); Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3 (ed. Macken, p. 190, ll. 38–42).

[10] Cf. Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, I, c. 5 (ed. S. Van Riet, Louvain – Leiden 1977, pp. 34–35): "unaquaeque enim res habet certitudinem qua est id quod est, sicut triangulus habet certitudinem qua est triangulus,

identifies the *ratio* of "being" with Avicenna's notion of "thing". This decision marks a basic difference with Thomas: Henry's transcendental perspective is determined by the "reality" of being, that is, by being in the quidditative sense.

The problem of the addition to "being"

THOMAS AQUINAS	HENRY OF GHENT
Unde oportet quod omnes aliae conceptiones intellectus accipiantur ex additione ad ens. Sed enti non possunt addi aliqua quasi extranea per modum quo differentia additur generi vel accidens subiecto, quia quaelibet natura est essentialiter ens; unde probat etiam Philosophus in III° *Metaph.* quod ens non potest esse genus,	Ita quod omnis alius conceptus rationem aliquam addit super iam dictam rationem entis, quae tamen non potest esse extranea ab ente, quia ratio entis omnes rationes subintrat. Unde et ens propterea non potest habere rationem generis.…[11]

From the claim that "being" is the first known, Henry, like Thomas, draws the conclusion that every other concept adds a *ratio* to "being". Here, however, for both thinkers a problem arises that is central in any doctrine of the transcendentals: How is such an addition possible? "Being" cannot be specified by the addition of a difference that lies outside the concept of "being". What is extrinsic to being is nothing; every difference includes "being" in its *ratio*. For this reason "being" cannot, as Aristotle teaches in the third book of his *Metaphysics* (c. 3, 998b 22), be a genus.

THOMAS AQUINAS	HENRY OF GHENT
sed secundum hoc aliqua dicuntur addere super ens, in quantum exprimunt modum ipsius entis, qui nomine entis non exprimitur.	Quidquid enim quocumque modo additur super rationem entis, hoc est ratio aliqua, vel modus essendi, quae nomine entis non explicatur nec intelligitur.[12]

et albedo habet certitudinem qua est albedo. (…) unaquaeque res habet certitudinem propriam quae est eius quidditas".

[11] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, p. 5, ll. 104–111); Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3 (ed. Macken, p. 190, ll. 43–46).

[12] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, p. 5, ll. 111–114); Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3 (ed. Macken, p. 190, ll. 46–48).

Henry's solution is the same as Aquinas's: an addition to "being" is only possible in the sense that what is added expresses a *ratio* or "mode of being" that is not expressed by the term "being" itself. The addition is a conceptual explication of that which is implicitly included in "being".

The "explication of being"

In the first three paragraphs the structure of both texts is identical, but now Henry and Thomas go separate ways. In *De veritate* q. 1, art. 1, Thomas presents a systematic derivation of the general modes of being. The most original element in his account is the explanation of the relational transcendentals "true" and "good" by the idea of a correlation between the human soul and being: *anima est quodammodo omnia*. The *convenientia* of being to the intellect is expressed by the name 'true'.

Henry's account has a different focus; he emphasizes the role of the intellect in the distinction of the transcendental notions. His doctrine is literally an "onto-logic", insofar as the explication of the general modes of being requires the distinguishing power of the intellect. Not the nature of the thing outside discerns or distinguishes such *rationes*, but solely the reasoning power (*ratio*) of the intellect that distinguishes what is indistinct in itself. The intellect, however, can only distinguish something, insofar as it falls under its apprehension. The *ratio* of "being", the first concept, does not determine the feature of intelligibility or non-intelligibility in a thing. The intelligibility of "being" therefore requires, in addition to the *ratio entis*, another *ratio* by which being has a relation to the intellect and can assimilate the intellect to it.[13]

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[13] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3 (ed. Macken, pp. 190–191): "Et quia tales rationes non discernit neque distinguit natura rei extra (…), sed solum 'ratio intellectus, quae indivisa et indistincta dividit et distinguit' (…), nihil autem est nata ratio intellectus distinguere, nisi in quantum cadit vel natum est cadere, sub eius apprehensione, ratio autem entis non determinat in re aliquam rationem apprehensibilis ab intellectu vel non apprehensibilis (…), oportet igitur quod super rationem entis, ut determinetur ad rationem intelligibilis, sit ratio apprehensibilis, qua ens respectum habet ad intellectum ut motivum intellectus (…). Haec enim ratio est in ente per hoc quod est natum sibi assimilare intellectum".

The ratio *of the "true"*

THOMAS AQUINAS	HENRY OF GHENT
Omnis autem cognitio perficitur per assimilationem cognoscentis ad rem cognitam, ita quod assimilatio dicta est causa cognitionis, sicut visus per hoc quod disponitur per speciem coloris, cognoscit colorem:	Assimilatio enim intellectus ad cognitum est causa et ratio cognitionis prima.
Prima ergo comparatio entis ad intellectum est ut ens intellectui concordet:	Prima ergo ratio, qua ens secundum rationem suam absolutam absque omni conditione assumit supra se intellectus considerationem, est ratio conformandi sibi intellectum.
quae quidem concordia adaequatio rei et intellectus dicitur; et in hoc formaliter ratio veri perficitur.	Conformatio autem huiusmodi adaequatio quaedam est et rectitudo, qua intellectus per id quod concipit de re ipsa, rei adaequatur et correspondet.
Hoc est ergo quod addit verum super ens, scilicet conformitatem sive adaequationem rei et intellectus, ad quam conformitatem, ut dictum est, sequitur cognitio rei.	Haec autem ratio est illa a qua imponitur hoc nomen 'verum' sive 'veritas', et addit eam super ens, ut verum nihil aliud sit quam ens assimilativum vel aequativum vel declarativum eius quod est apud intellectum.[14]

In this section Henry's reflections again are similar to Aquinas's. The assimilation of the intellect to the thing known is the cause of knowledge. From this both authors draw a conclusion with respect to the relation of "being" to the intellect. Thomas designates this relation with the term *concordia*, Henry with the term *conformatio*. Consequently "truth" is understood as the "adequation" (*adaequatio*) of thing and intellect; Henry also uses the Anselmian notion of "rectitude" (*rectitudo*).

Finally the *ratio* that the "true" adds to "being" is established. For Thomas the addition consists in the "conformity" or "adequation" of thing and intellect; this determination assumes a realized relation of truth. For Henry the ontological condition of the possibility of truth is rather fundamental: *Verum* is nothing other than being capable of assimilating (*ens assimilativum*) or adequating (*aequativum*) or

[14] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, pp. 5–6, ll. 162–174); Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3 (ed. Macken, p. 191, ll. 62–71).

declaring (*declarativum*) itself to the intellect. The last determination refers to the definition of truth that since Philip the Chancellor has been attributed to Hilary of Poitiers: "The true is that which declares and manifests being (*declarativum et manifestativum esse*)".[15]

The priority of "being" and of "true"

At the end of his account in the *Summa* art. 34, q. 3 Henry makes some observations on the priority of *ens* and *verum*. The notion of "being" is the first concept of the intellect "objectively" (*obiective*), even though it is only conceived under the aspect of "true". The notion of "true" is the first means of conceiving, although it is not the *ratio* that is first conceived. Henry ascribes a priority both to "being" and to "true", but in different ways. He distinguishes between an "objectively" and a "dispositively" first concept, but does not explain his terminology. The distinction seems to refer to different levels of human knowledge. The phrase *obiective* relates to that which is conceived; *dispositive* ("in the manner of a preparation or disposition") concerns rather the necessary condition of conceiving. "Being as being" is the first concept "objectively", but the "true" is the first means of conceiving "dispositively" and as the *ratio* according to which that which is conceived "objectively" is conceived. In this sense the *ratio* of *verum* alone "goes around (*circuit*) the totality of being", because everything—"being", "true", "good" and "beautiful"—is conceived under this aspect.[16]

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[15] For Henry's conception of truth, cf. S. P. Marrone, *Truth and Scientific Knowledge in the Thought of Henry of Ghent*. J. Decorte, "Henri de Gand et la définition classique de la vérité", in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 68 (2001), pp. 34–74. C. Kann, "Wahrheit und Wahrheitserkenntnis bei Heinrich von Gent", in: G. Guldentops / C. Steel, *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought*, pp. 157–175.

[16] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3 (ed. Macken, pp. 191–192): "Et sic ratio entis non includit ex suo nomine rationem veri intelligibilis vel declarativi sui apud animam, sed e converso ratio veri includit rationem entis, quia, licet primus conceptus intellectus obiective sit ratio entis, non tamen concipitur nisi sub ratione veri, et licet ratio veri sit prima ratio concipiendi, non tamen est ratio quae primo concipitur. Obiective enim et ut concipitur, id quod est ens, in quantum est ens, primus conceptus est, et deinde verum, ut tamen ens in se includit. Dispositive autem et ut ratio secundum quam concipitur id quod obiective concipitur, verum est prima ratio concipiendi, et sola, ut dictum est supra, ita quod circuit totum ens, et se ipsum et omnes rationes entis, quia nihil concipitur nisi sub ratione veri, neque ens, neque verum, neque bonum, neque pulchrum, neque aliquod ceterorum. Tamen, cum concipitur ratio entis vel boni vel pulchri ut obiectum circa ens, non oportet quod concipiatur ratio veri". Remarkable in this text is the inclusion of "the beautiful" into the most general notions, but Henry nowhere integrates *pulchrum* into his doctrine of the transcendentals (see ch. 4.3).

From this angle, one could say, the "true" is "more transcendental" than "being".[17]

Conclusion

The comparative textual analysis of Henry's account of the transcendentals in the *Summa* art. 34, q. 3 and Thomas's exposition in *De veritate* q. 1, art. 1, shows some peculiarities of Henry's doctrine.

Henry adds something new to the traditional claim that "being" is the first concept of the intellect. That which is first known is *ens inquantum ens*. In other texts in his *Summa*, he maintains this primacy in the same terms. In art. 1, q. 12, he draws a parallel between the cognitive order of what is not composed (the *incomplexa*), that is, the knowledge of concepts, and that of the *complexa*, the knowledge of propositions. In the incomplex knowledge, the first concept is that of "being as being" (*ens inquantum ens*); all other concepts are derived, or "elicited" in Henry's terminology, from it by deduction. In the complex knowledge, the first principle is the principle of contradiction. Following Thomas (see ch. 6.3.1), he establishes not only an analogy but also a relation of foundation between what is first in both orders: the first complex principle is founded (*fundatur*) upon the concept of being as being. Henry explicitly relates the first concept of "being" with the subject of metaphysics.[18] Unlike Thomas, he does not distinguish between that which is first known, a primitive notion of "being" in the sense of "that which is" (*ens*), based on our experience of material things, and a metaphysical notion, an understanding

[17] O. Boulnois, "*Abstractio metaphysica*. Le séparable et le séparé, de Porphyre à Henri de Gand", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, Berlin – New York 2003 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 30), pp. 37–59, here p. 58.

[18] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 1, q. 12 (ed. G. A. Wilson, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXI, Leuven 2005, pp. 189–191): "(…) ut in incomplexis principiis primum principium et primus conceptus est conceptus entis, in quantum est ens, sub quo sunt omnes alii conceptus incomplexi, et ex ipso et post ipsum concipiuntur. Ex conceptu enim entis via deductionis ratione definitiva eliciuntur omnes alii conceptus incomplexi sequentes. Unde dicit Avicenna in I° Metaphysicae suae: 'Res et ens talia sunt quod statim imprimuntur in anima prima impressione (…)'. Secundum quem modum a primo philosopho, cuius subiectum est ens inquantum ens, omnis alius artifex subiectum suum sumit tamquam aliquod ens particulare sub ente simpliciter. In complexis vero primum principium et primus conceptus est qui primo fundatur super conceptus entis in quantum ens est, et sic est ille 'de quolibet affirmatio vel negatio et non simul de eodem' (…). Sub hoc enim conceptu complexo sunt omnes alii conceptus complexi, et ex ipso et post ipsum concipiuntur".

of being *as being*, the subject of metaphysics. Typical, too, of Henry's understanding of being is his identification of "being" with the Avicennian notion of *res*. *Ens* signifies the *certitudo*, by which everything is that which it is in its essence.

The "true" takes a special position within Henry's doctrine of the transcendentals, because it possesses a certain priority to "being". The *ratio* of the "true" is *dispositive* the first, that is, the condition of the possibility for any "objective" knowledge. The special place of *verum* was already expressed by Henry in his first exposition of the most general concepts at the beginning of the *Summa* (art. 1, q. 2). The first *ratio* graspable by the intellect is that of "being". This conclusion does not impede the claim that the concept of "being" is only understood under the aspect of "true" (*verum*). "True", however, is not, insofar as it is the *ratio* of understanding "being", object of the intellect, as "being" is, but is the *ratio* of intelligibility in everything. The object is rather the true being (*verum ens*) or the true good (*verum bonum*).[19]

The primacy of *verum*, which signifies the intelligibility of being, is a new development in the doctrine of the transcendentals. There had been attempts, for instance, by Albertus Magnus (see ch. 5.3.2), to connect the primacy of the "good" (*bonum*) in the Platonic-Dionysian tradition with the doctrine. The primacy of the "true" appears as a topic only in early fourteenth-century discussions. In his analysis of the "first adequate object" of the intellect, Duns Scotus raises the question as to whether the transcendental *verum* instead of "being" is this object (see ch. 9.4.3). The arguments he advances in support of this position are partly taken from Henry of Ghent.

7.1.2 *On goodness (and Aquinas's* De veritate *q. 21, a. 1)*

Henry's account in *Summa* art. 41, q. 1 is modeled on Aquinas's exposition in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1 ("Does good add something to being?"), as it appears from the structure of both texts.

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[19] *Ibid.*, q. 2 (pp. 37–38): "Quamquam enim intentio entis non intelligitur nisi sub ratione veri, quod est per se obiectum intellectus, non tamen verum in eo quod est ratio intelligendi ens est obiectum intellectus, sicut est ens. Ratio enim veri est ratio intelligibilitatis in quocunque, obiectum tamen est verum ens vel verum bonum, et sic de aliis rerum intentionibus".

1. Aquinas commences with a systematic analysis of the problem of the addition. He distinguishes three ways in which something can be added to something else. (i) The addition of a reality (*res*) which is outside the essence of the thing to which it is added. An example of this manner is the addition of the accidental form "white" to "body". (ii) The addition by contracting and determining (*per modum contrahendi et determinandi*) something else. "Man", for instance, adds something to "animal", but not in the sense that there is in man any reality altogether outside the essence of animal. "Animal" is rather contracted by this manner of addition, because what is contained determinately and actually in the concept of "man" is contained implicitly and, as it were, potentially in the concept of "animal". (iii) The addition of something merely conceptual (*secundum rationem*). This is the case, when what is added is not something in nature but only in reason. Since Aristotle, in his *Ethics* (I, c. 4), has shown that the good, just as being, is found in all categories, the "good" cannot add something to "being" in the first or second way, but must either add something in the third way or add nothing at all. The "good", however, is not synonymous with "being"; it thus adds something merely conceptual.[20]

In the *Summa* art. 41, q. 1, Henry summarizes Aquinas's analysis. In his designation of the three possible manners of addition (*aliud re… aliud intentione… aliquid secundum rationem*), he introduces an innovation of his theory of distinction. The second way of addition, that by "contraction", is called by Henry an "intentional" distinction, which stands midway between a "real" distinction (because it is less than this) and a purely "rational" distinction (because it is more).[21] The "good" adds something in the third manner; it only adds to "being" another *ratio*, which signifies a "determinate mode of being" (*modus entis*).[22] This passage is one of the few texts in Henry's work, in which

[20] Thomas Aquinas, De veritate, q. 21, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/3, p. 592–593).

[21] Cf. *Quodlibet* X, q. 7 (ed. R. Macken, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XIV, Leuven 1981, pp. 164–166), in which Henry explains the three kinds of distinction. On his theory of the "intentional" distinction, J. Paulus, *Henri de Gand. Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, Paris 1938 (Etudes de Philosophie médiévale, 25), pp. 220–236; J. F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines. A Study in Late Thirteenth-Century Philosophy*, Washington, D.C., 1981, pp. 79–89.

[22] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 41, q. 1 (ed. L. Hödl, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXIX, Leuven 1998, pp. 5–6): "Et 'cum *bonum* dividitur primo *aequaliter* in decem praedicamenta, sicut ens', ut vult Philosophus in principio Ethicorum, necessarium est quod ipsum differat ab esse, sive a natura et essentia rei, in qua fundatur secundum

he expressly states that the difference between the transcendental determinations is a conceptual distinction, not an intentional one.[23]

2. Henry specifies the kinds of a conceptual addition in a similar manner to Aquinas. The added mode of being cannot be "positive" or "absolute", since such an addition would set a real or an intentional distinction. A rational addition can therefore only be "negative" or "relational". The negative mode added to "being" is the negation of diversity from itself, which is expressed by the concept of "one". Consequently, the "good", like the "true", must add to "being" a relation of reason.[24]

3. In order to determine the conceptual relations that the "true" and the "good" add to "being", both Aquinas and Henry distinguish a double element in any being. Their formulations are similar, but in reality different ontologies are behind them.

In Aquinas's view, two aspects are to be considered in any being: "the intelligible nature (*ratio*) of the *species* and being itself (*ipsum esse*) by which it subsists in that species". This duality refers to a difference typical of Thomas's ontology, that between the quiddity and *esse* in every being. On the basis of this complexity Aquinas, in *De veritate* q. 1, art. 1, had determined the difference between *ens* and *res*: the name "being" is taken from the act of being, the name "thing" from the quiddity. In *De veritate* q. 21, art. 1, Aquinas claims that according to both elements a being can be perfective (*perfectivum*).

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rationem tantum, quia neque aliud re addit essentiae, sicut album addit super corpus, nec aliud intentione, sicut sensibile addit super vegetabile, quia tunc bonum contraheret ens, sed solum super esse et essentiam rei cuius est, addit aliquid secundum rationem, hoc est aliam rationem quam sit ratio esse vel entis, quae est determinatus modus ipsius entis, ne bonum sit omnino synonymum cum esse vel ente".

[23] Cf. *ibid.*, a. 39, q. 7 (ed. G. A. Wilson, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXVIII, Leuven 1994, p. 243): "Ordo autem rationis est inter ens, verum, bonum in unoquoque ente". Another text is *Quodlibet* XI, q. 3 (ed. L. Badius, Paris 1518, Vol. I [reprinted in Louvain 1961], fol. 443r N).

[24] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 41, q. 1 (ed. Hödl, p. 6): "Determinatus autem modus qui est rationis tantum, positivus et absolutus esse non potest, quia nihil est tale quid, nisi ponat rem aut intentionem aliquam aliam super illud cuius est. Oportet igitur quod sit negativus aut positivus respectus (…). Negativum autem modum nihil potest addere super ens nisi negando a se ipso diversitatem, quia ens quodcumque ex natura sua ad se ipsum identitatem ponit ex eo quod est. Et ille modus significatur nomine unius et format primum conceptum additum rationi entis. Oportet igitur quod bonum super ens et unum addat respectum rationis tantum".

Henry also considers two aspects in any being: "the *species* and that which subsists in that form or species". But his account of the transcendentals in *Summa* art. 34, q. 3 has shown that he identifies the *ratio* of "being" with the Avicennian notion of *res*; "Being" signifies the "certitude" of a thing, its quiddity. For this reason alone the duality in the structure of being must have another sense than in Aquinas. Henry explains the duality from the twofold effect of the *species*. The species can be seen as what manifests and declares (*manifestativa et declarativa*) the thing, namely, that it is what it is, and as what perfects and completes (*perfectiva et completiva*) the thing in its being—here Henry uses Thomas's key notion of *perfectivum*.[25]

4. On the basis of their distinction between two elements in any being both Aquinas and Henry finally determine the *ratio* of "true" and of "good". Aquinas concludes that a being can be perfective only according to its *species*. In this way the intellect is perfected, because a thing is not in the intellect according to its own natural being but in a spiritual manner. It is this first mode of perfecting that the "true" adds to "being". In a second way a being can be perfective of another not only according to the intelligible nature of the species, but also according to the being (*esse*) that it has in reality. This mode of perfecting is expressed by the "good".[26]

Henry defines "true" and "good" from the twofold consideration of the *species* in a thing. A thing can be considered insofar as through its species it is apt to manifest (*manifestativa*) itself; in this way it is denominated "true", since "true" signifies the relation of reason a thing has to the intellect by which it is known. A thing can also be considered insofar as it is perfected in its being through its species; in this way it is denominated "good", since the "good" signifies the relation of reason of a thing to its species.[27] The "good" is the last in the order of

[25] *Ibid.*: "In re autem qualibet, tam creata quam increata, est considerare et speciem et ipsum subsistens in forma et specie. Species autem duo habet agere, et secundum hoc duo habet respicere: secundum considerationem intellectus nostri est species primo rei manifestativa et declarativa, scilicet quia est id quod est; secundo est rei in suo esse perfectiva et completiva".

[26] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/3, p. 593, ll. 181–198).

[27] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 41, q. 1 (ed. Hödl, pp. 6–7): "Unde, cum res nata est denominari a sua forma et specie secundum ea quae forma agit circa eam, potest ergo considerari res, ut per formam suam et speciem ipsa res nata est manifestari esse id quod est. Sic consideratur in ipsa respectus rationis quem habet per suam speciem

the transcendentals, it signifies being as attaining its perfection. Unlike Aquinas, for whom the good is perfective of something else (*perfectivum alterius*), the perfective character of the good in Henry refers to a thing *in itself*.[28]

7.2 "Thing" (*res*) and "being" (*ens*)

Henry never uses the term *transcendentia* but prefers the Avicennian expression *intentiones primae*; he apparently considers the cognitive priority as the most essential characteristic of transcendentality. The impact of Avicenna's teaching on the primary notions of the intellect on Henry is manifest throughout his work. He does even not hesitate to refer to this doctrine with the phrase *secundum Avicennam et secundum rei veritatem* ("according to Avicenna and according to the truth of things").[29]

A distinctive feature of Henry's thought compared with Aquinas's is the special position he attributes to the notion of *res*. This assertion seems paradoxical, because, whereas Aquinas gives "thing" a place in his exposition of the transcendentals, Henry completely ignores this notion in his two accounts. However, in the article in the *Summa* that immediately precedes his first account of the transcendentals (art. 34, q. 2), he explicitly maintains the priority of "thing". In this text Henry lists three primary notions, *res, ens* and *verum*, which he arranges according to their different kinds of firstness. The *ratio* of "thing" is the first in every created being, that of "being" is the *ratio* of the first concept of the intellect, and that of "true" is the first *ratio* by which something is conceivable (*conceptibile*). Between these notions there exists a relation of foundation in the sense that the *ratio* of *ens* is founded upon the meaning of *res*, the *ratio* of *verum* on the mean-

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ad intellectum cognoscentem, et denominatur hoc nomine verum, ut patet ex supra determinatis. Potest etiam alio modo considerari res, ut per suam formam et speciem habet perfici et compleri secundum se in suo esse. Sic consideratur in ipsa respectus rationis ad ipsam formam et speciem suam, et denominatur hoc nomine bonum".

[28] *Ibid.* (p. 7): "(…) et sic ratio speciei in quantum perficit, se habet per additionem ad rationem speciei simpliciter, ideo post rationem entis et unius est tertio ratio veri et quarto ratio boni. Sic ergo bonum significat principaliter suo nomine ens perfectionem suam attingens". Cf. *ibid.*, a. 44, q. 2 (p. 106): "veritas consequitur rem ratione suae formae, ut est manifestativa eius apud cognoscentem, bonitas vero consequitur rem ratione suae formae, ut ipsa est perfectiva rei in se ipsa".

[29] *Ibid.*, a. 22, q. 5 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 134vD).

ing of *ens*.[30] How is this special position of *res* to be reconciled with the claim in the account of the transcendentals (*Summa* art. 34, q. 3) that *ens* is that which is first known? Is there in Henry, as it has been suggested, a "probably insoluble tension between the primacy of *ens* and that of *res*"?[31]

7.2.1 *The two modes of* res

Henry's thought means a new phase in the history of *res* in medieval philosophy, because he connects the Avicennian concept "thing" with a Latin logical tradition.[32] He distinguishes between two modes of *res*, a distinction corresponding with a twofold etymology of the term. The distinction is clearly dear to Henry, as he advances it at many places in his work; in the text just cited from the *Summa* art. 34, q. 2, for instance, he connects the two modes of *res* with the order of the primary notions "thing" and "being".

The first mode of *res*, "a thing according to opinion only", is derived etymologically from *reor, reris,* a verb that means "to opine", that is, "to think" or "to imagine". "Thing" in the sense of "I think, you think" signifies imaginary or fictitious things, such as a golden mountain or the goat-stag (*hircocervus*)—an animal half goat and half stag, mentioned by Aristotle in his *Posterior Analytics* (II, c. 7). The other mode of *res,* a "true thing" is called after *res, ratitudo,* which means that a thing is "ratified" or fixed so that it has an internal "stability"; the term *ratitudo* recalls the notion *certitudo*, which Avicenna used in his explanation of the concept *res* and which is the quiddity or essence of something. This mode signifies things that are at least capable of actual existence.[33]

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[30] *Ibid.*, a. 34, q. 2 (ed. Macken, pp. 174–175): "sciendum quod ratio rei dictae a reor reris prima est in unoquoque ente creato, et super illam rationem rei prima ratio quae fundatur, est ratio entis sive esse quidditativi (…), a quo accipitur ratio rei dictae a ratitudine, quae eadem est cum ratione entis quidditativi. (…) Quia autem verum est prima ratio qua aliquid est conceptibile ab intellectu (…), ideo tertio ratio veri fundatur in ratione entis quidditativi, quod dicitur res a ratitudine".

[31] R. Schönberger, *Die Transformation des klassischen Seinsverständnisses, Studien zur Vorgeschichte des neuzeitlichen Seinsbegriffs im Mittelalter,* Berlin – New York 1986 (Quellen und Studien zur Philosophie, 21), p. 115.

[32] Cf. A. Grondeux, "*Res* Meaning a Thing Thought, The Influence of the *Ars Donati*", in: *Vivarium* 45 (2007), pp. 189–202.

[33] See, for instance, Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VII, qq. 1–2 (ed. G. A. Wilson, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XI, Leuven 1991, p. 27): "Res primo modo est 'res' secundum

Henry's distinction between the cognitive and the ontological mode of *res* and its technical vocabulary were not his original achievement; they were already put forward by Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas in their commentaries on the *Sentences* when they deal with the ontological status of sin.[34] But it is only in Henry that the two modes of *res* are incorporated into a comprehensive view of "reality". A key text that illustrates his position is Henry's seventh *Quodlibet*, in which he wants to clarify "the nature of the relation" that "can scarcely be grasped by most people". To that end he takes a broad approach and begins with the most general concept.

"The most common (*communissimum*) of all, that contains everything in an analogous scope (*ambitus analogus*), is 'thing' (*res*) or 'something' (*aliquid*)". This is the most general concept, since it is only opposed to pure nothing (*purum nihil*), which has no possibility of being, either in the outside world or in the intellect. *Res* in the broadest sense is anything about which the intellect can form a concept, for nothing is apt to move the intellect except if it has the feature of some *realitas*.[35] Note that the opposite of *nihil* is not "being", but "thing".

The most general concept "thing" is next divided analogously into that which either is or is apt to be in the intellect only, and that which on top of that either is or is apt to be in reality outside the intellect.[36] With this division Henry connects the distinction between the two modes of *res*, "thing" in the sense of *reor, reris* and "thing" in the sense of *ratitudo*. A point deserving consideration is that he calls the distinction between the two modes "analogical". Henry does not explain his idea of analogy in this context, but it must mean that the modes

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opinionem tantum et dicitur 'a reor, reris', quod idem est quod 'opinor, opinaris' (…). Aliquid autem, sive res nata esse vel quae est aliquid extra intellectum, quae dicitur 'res a ratitudine' (…)".

[34] Bonaventure, *In II Sententiarum*, d. 37, dub. I (ed. Collegium S. Bonaventurae, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. II, Quaracchi 1885, p. 876). Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sententiarum*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. R. P. Mandonnet, Paris 1929, pp. 943–944). Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Transcendental Thought in Henry of Ghent", pp. 10–14.

[35] Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VII, qq. 1–2 (ed. Wilson, pp. 26–27): "sciendum quod omnium communissimum, omnia continens in quodam ambitu analogo, est res sive aliquid, sic consideratum ut nihil sit ei oppositum nisi purum nihil, quod nec est nec natum est esse, neque in re extra intellectum, neque etiam in conceptu alicuius intellectus, quia nihil est natum movere intellectum nisi habens rationem alicuius realitatis".

[36] *Ibid.* (p. 27): "sed distinguitur distinctione analogica in id quod est aut natum est esse tantum in conceptu intellectus sive in ipso intellectu, et in id quod cum hoc aut est aut natum est esse in re extra intellectum".

divided are ordered according to a relation of prior and posterior. He explicates this relation when discussing "thing" in the sense of *reor*, *reris*, such as a golden mountain. It is a thing according to opinion only with respect to the mode in which it is conceived by the intellect, namely, in the form of a whole. It is nevertheless a true thing, insofar as its parts, a mountain and gold, are concerned. The whole could not be in the intellect, "if the parts were not something according to truth, because the intellect cannot be moved by something else".[37] Henry reduces a fictitious whole, the first mode of thing, to its true parts, the second mode of thing. This mode is constitutive for intellectual knowledge; it is that which, in Henry's terms, "moves" the intellect.

In the continuation of the *Quodlibet* Henry presents a further division of *res* in the sense of *ratitudo*, the thing according to truth. It is divided into something that is being (*esse*) itself, namely uncreated being, and something to which being belongs or is apt to belong, that is, the created thing. Only the latter member of the division, the quiddity and essence of the creature, can have being in the genus of a category.[38] The remaining part of the text, which we leave outside of consideration here, examines the relation of the creaturely essence to the diverse categorial modes of being.

In the seventh *Quodlibet* Henry sketches a comprehensive picture of the structure of "reality" that begins with the most general and ends with the categories. In another *Quodlibet*, the fifth, we find a somewhat different topology of *res*. There Henry states that the first and most common concept (*primus conceptus communissimus*) is common both "to an idle concept", such as that of a goat-stag, and "to a true concept", such as that of the divine essence and the creature. This agrees with the two modes of thing in the seventh *Quodlibet*, but Henry goes on to say that the first and most general concept is the concept by which *res* in the sense of *reor, reris* is conceived. *Res* in this

[37] *Ibid.*: "Est tamen res secundum veritatem quoad partes eius quae sunt mons et aurum et huiusmodi; aliter enim non posset totum esse in intellectu et ens secundum opinionem, nisi partes essent aliquid secundum veritatem, quia ab alio non potest moveri intellectus".

[38] *Ibid.* (pp. 27–28): "dividitur divisione analogica in id quod est aliquid quod est ipsum esse, et in id quod est aliquid cui convenit aut natum est convenire esse. Primum est ens increatum. Secundum continet rem omnis creaturae (…). Nulla tamen res habet esse in genere praedicamenti, nisi sit talis quod non sit ipsum esse, sed solummodo id cui habet convenire vel natum est convenire esse. Et hoc est per se quidditas et natura cuiuslibet creaturae".

sense includes the imaginary thing as well as the true thing, which is the nature and essence of something and is apt to exist in the outside world. The true thing is not only a *res* in the sense of *reor* but also in the sense of *ratitudo*.[39] Thus in this text *res, a reor* is not presented as the first mode of thing, the figment, but as the most general concept. In this way, the meaning of "thing", taken *communissime*, becomes clearer than in the seventh *Quodlibet*: it signifies anything about which the intellect can form a concept without determining whether it is or is not a nature or essence.

Duns Scotus offers a good summary of Henry's position, in which he replaces the etymological vocabulary of *res* with a more philosophical terminology. Scotus distinguishes three levels: the *realitas opinabilis*, that is, the reality corresponding with *res, a reor*; the *realitas quiditativa*, that is, the reality corresponding with *res a ratitudine*; and finally the *realitas existentiae*, for the preceding levels of reality do not require actual existence.[40]

7.2.2 *A "new" metaphysics?*

What are the consequences of Henry's account of "reality"? The focus of the interpreters has been on the first mode of *res* in the sense of *reor*, expressing what is thinkable, because for Henry it is the *communissimum* of all (*Quodl.* VII) and "the first and most common concept" (*Quodl.* V). Avicenna's view of the extensional, transcendental identity of *res* and *ens* seems to be abandoned, since the most common concept of "thing" surpasses "being". This concept would provide the basis for a new form of metaphysics, as Jean Paulus maintained in his pioneering study *Henri de Gand. Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, which dates from 1938 and is still fundamental.

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[39] *Quodlibet* V, q. 2 (ed. Paris 1518, Vol. I, fol. 154rD): "sciendum quod primus conceptus communissimus et communis ad conceptum vanum quo concipitur saltem modo privatorio id cui nihil natum est respondere in re, ut est conceptus fictitius chimaerae vel hircocervi, et ad conceptum verum quo concipitur modo positivo id quod est aliquid per essentiam, et natum existere extra intellectum in rerum existentia, ut est conceptus divinae essentiae et creaturae. Primus inquam conceptus communissimus et communis ad illum conceptum et ad istum, est conceptus quo concipitur res a reor reris dicta, quae continet sub se rem imaginariam (…). Et continet sub se rem veram (…). Res enim quaecumque sive existens sive non existens, si habet esse in deo secundum exemplarem rationem, non solum dicitur quod est res dicta a reor reris, sed etiam quod sit natura et essentia aliqua. Et ideo dicitur res a ratitudine".

[40] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 2, q. un., n. 310 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. III, Vatican 1954, pp. 188–9).

In the introduction of his book, Paulus defines the basic tendency of Henry's metaphysics by determining its place in the conflict of two philosophical methods. The first of them, the "realist" approach that is typical of Aristotle and Aquinas, goes from being to knowing, from the real to the mental; its point of departure is "objective" being. The other method, the "idealist" approach, goes from knowing to being by starting from the *idea* of being. "If it is proper to an idealistic philosophy to take its point of departure in the order of concepts, and not immediately in things, one is obliged to say that Henry of Ghent begins as an idealist".[41] The primary concern of Henry's metaphysics is to discover an idea so general and simple that all other ideas are virtually contained in it. This idea is not, Paulus emphasizes, the notion of "being", for the notion sought contains not only every conceivable object, but also every content of thought, regardless of whether an object corresponds to it. This primary concept is "thing" (*res*) or "something" (*aliquid*)—the seventh *Quodlibet* teaches us "the true movement of Henry's thought".[42]

Paulus considers the concept of "thing" as "the point of departure" of Henry's metaphysics—it is the title of the first section of the first chapter of his book.[43] This expression deserves attention, since it recalls the main work of the Belgian philosopher Joseph Maréchal (1878–1944), *Le point de départ de la métaphysique,* of which the famous fifth "cahier" meant to re–found Thomas Aquinas's metaphysics by using Kant's transcendental method.[44] Paulus's reading of Henry has definitely been influenced by the "transcendental turn" in Neoscholasticism, for he calls Henry's primary concept "thing" "the transcendental form in the Kantian sense", that is, an a priori form of every product of the intellect.[45]

In its turn, Paulus's book strongly influenced two recent French studies on "the genealogy of modern metaphysics", in which Henry of Ghent has a key position. They put forward the thesis of a transformation of this discipline to the effect that early modern metaphysics is in fact not

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[41] J. Paulus, *Henri de Gand*, p. 21.
[42] *Ibid*., p. 25, n. 2.
[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 21–28: "Le point de départ de la métaphysique".
[44] J. Maréchal, *Le point de départ de la métaphysique, Leçons sur le développement historique et théorique du problème de la connaissance,* Cahier V: *Le thomisme devant la philosophie critique,* Louvain-Paris 1926. Paulus does not mention Maréchal's name in his book, but in an earlier study he explicitly refers to him. Cf. J. Paulus, "Henri de Gand et l'argument ontologique", in: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen-Age* 10 (1935–1936), pp. 265–323, here pp. 322–323.
[45] J. Paulus, *Henri de Gand*, p. 22: "Elle est (…) la forme transcendentale, au sens kantien, de tout produit de l'intellect".

a "transcendental" theory but rather a "supertranscendental science". As such it is not ontology, but a doctrine of "thing" (*res*) in the sense of "something" (*aliquid*, Greek: *ti*), for which they introduce the term "tino-logy" (see ch. XV).[46] With an explicit reference to Paulus, J.-F. Courtine concludes that this turn started with the new concept of reality and *res* in Henry of Ghent.[47]

In summary: modern scholarship has attempted to show the distance between Henry's metaphysics and Aquinas, and to establish Henry's "newness". His thought has been interpreted as "idealist" in a transcendental-logical sense, since its point of departure is an "idea" rather than an "object", or as a (supertranscendental) doctrine of "thing" rather than as an ontology. We shall look critically at these attempts without wishing to deny the innovative character of Henry's metaphysics. One wonders what the medieval equivalent of the phrase "point of departure" of metaphysics is: is it the primary concept of the intellect or the proper subject of metaphysics?[48] In contrast to Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, Henry did not compose a commentary on the *Metaphysics*,[49] but his observations in the *Summa* and *Quodlibeta* give an overall picture of his conception.

7.2.3 *The primacy of "thing" and of "being"*

The stages in the process of scientific knowledge

Instructive for the relation between the notions "thing" and "being" is Henry's analysis of the process of scientific knowledge—in the context of a question concerning the human knowledge of God's being (art. 24,

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[46] J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, Paris 1990, p. 537. O. Boulnois, *Être et représentation. Une généalogie de la métaphysique moderne à l'époque de Duns Scot (XIII^e–XIV^e siècle),* Paris 1999, p. 512.

[47] J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, pp. 183–184 (with a reference to J. Paulus) and p. 379.

[48] Fundamental is M. Pickavé, *Heinrich von Gent über Metaphysik als erste Wissenschaft*. Cf. R. Guerizoli, "Au-delà de la *scientia transcendens*? Le cas Henri de Gand", in: R. H. Pich (ed.), *New Essays on Metaphysics as 'scientia transcendens'*, Louvain-la-Neuve 2007 (Textes et Etudes du Moyen Age, 43), pp. 69–89.

[49] The anonymous *Metaphysics* commentary in Escorial h. II.1 has sometimes been attributed to Henry of Ghent. Cf. P. Porro, "Le *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam* attribuite a Enrico di Gand: elementi per un sondaggio dottrinale", in: *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 13 (2002), pp. 507–602. M. Pickavé, however, considers Henry's authorship as unlikely (*Heinrich von Gent*, pp. 369–374).

q. 3). He distinguishes different stages in this process on the basis of the difference between the questions *si est* (or *an est*) and *quid est*, derived from the Aristotelian theory of science.[50] In his *Posterior Analytics* (II, c. 1, 92b 5–8), Aristotle had stated that the question of "what" something is follows upon the "whether" question. But a difficulty then arises: it is impossible to ask "whether" something is, if "what" it is is completely unknown. When we, for instance, raise the question of whether the goat-stag exists, we must at least know what the name of the object signifies. Henry includes these reflections in his account.

That which precedes all other knowledge (*scientia*) about something is a mere precognition (*praecognitio*) of what something is (*quid est*). It consists in a confused understanding of what is signified by the name (*ratio nominis*). Such a nominal concept of something does not grasp the ontological status of a thing; it remains undetermined whether it is a pure figment or a real being. Henry links this bare precognition with the most general concept of "thing", with *res* in the sense of *reor*, *reris* that determines neither essential being (*esse essentiae*) nor existential being (*esse existentiae*) nor non-being but that is indifferent to these determinations.[51]

The confused precognition of the *quid est* immediately leads to a doubt about what is conceived, namely, whether it is a nature or essence, possessing an *esse essentiae* or, in other words, whether it is a "thing" in the sense of *res a ratitudine*. This *dubitatio*, which needs to be resolved at the beginning of any scientific knowledge (*cognitio scientialis*), is the question *si est*, asking whether something is or is not

[50] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 24, q. 3 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 138vM): "Utrum eadem cognitione cognoscitur de deo an sit et quid sit?" For this text, cf. S. D. Dumont, "The *quaestio si est* and the Metaphysical Proof for the Existence of God according to Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus", in: *Franziskanische Studien* 66 (1984), pp. 335–367. P. Porro, *Enrico di Gand. La via delle proposizioni universali*, Bari 1990 (Vestigia—Studi e Strumenti di Storiografia Filosofica, 2), pp. 17–40.

[51] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 24, q. 3 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 138vO): "Quid est enim praecognitio est nuda, et simpliciter cognitio, et intellectus confusus eius quod significatur per nomen, nihil in significato nominis determinando, neque quod sit eius quod est ens in rerum natura neque quod sit non ens, sed solum quod de se sit conceptuus aliquis, et res non 'a ratitudine', sed a 'reor reris' dicta, quae ex sua intentione non determinat aliquod esse essentiae vel existentiae, neque non esse, sed se habet per indifferentiam ad id quod purum nihil est, ut Hircocervus vel Tragelaphus, et quod est essentia et natura aliqua (…). Et ideo ex cognitione eius quod quid est ut est praecognitio, solum quod dicitur per nomen intelligere oportet, ut dicitur in principio Posteriorum. Et est primum quod per vocem apprehendit et praecedens omnem aliam notitiam et scientiam de re quacumque".

an essential being.[52] The first doubt is founded on the first and most simple concept of the intellect, *ens*, which, according to Avicenna, is immediately impressed in the soul. The knowledge of the *si est* is a knowledge of being as such (*absolutum*); it does not determine whether it is "this" or "that" (*hoc vel illud*), creator or creature, substance or accident. In this way the being of a thing is grasped under that aspect (*ratio*), by which *ens* is the subject (*subiectum*) of metaphysics.[53]

The third phase in the process of knowledge arises from the doubt as to whether the being that was conceived indeterminately is a substance or an accident. The question *quid est* seeks an answer to this *dubitatio* and tries to determine being's specific nature (*ratio definitiva*).[54] Henry sees the order of the questions *si est* and *quid est* as an continuous progress in the quidditative analysis.

This account of the scientific procedure offers important clarifications concerning a number of issues. They enable us to draw some conclusions that oppose influential interpretations of Henry's "new" metaphysics but also show his innovations.

"Being": The "first object" of the intellect and the "subject" of metaphysics

1. Henry relates the division of the notion of *res* into two modes to two stages of knowledge: pre-scientific and scientific. The most gen-

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[52] *Ibid*., (fol. 138vP): "Quo cognito statim de concepto in ratione nominis (…) statim dubitat homo de eo quod ratio nominis de se non determinavit, videlicet si est vel non est res, scilicet aut natura aliqua quo ad esse essentiae. Et est prima dubitatio fundata super primum conceptum mentis qui est entis (…). Unde dubitatio de re quacumque an sit in esse essentiae natura aliqua, an non, debet determinari in principio cuiuslibet cognitionis scientialis".

[53] *Ibid*.: "Et est istud scire de primo et simplicissimo conceptu incomplexo entis, qui natus est haberi de eo quod scitur praecognitione eius quod dicitur per nomen, scilicet an ipsum sit res et aliqua natura, qui est primus conceptus simplicissimus, quia de esse absoluto simpliciter dicto non determinando circa ipsum hoc vel illud, sive in genere sive in specie, quod statim, ut dicitur Avicenna I Metaphysicae suae, 'prima impressione in anima imprimitur' (…). Et ita sicut in praecognitione quid est, cognoscitur simpliciter quid dicitur per nomen, non determinando esse vel non esse, sic in cognitione de re si est incomplexum cognoscitur simpliciter esse de re intellecta si est, non determinando circa ipsam an sit hoc vel illud, creator vel creatura, substantia aut accidens. Et hoc est comprehendere esse de re sub illa ratione qua ens est subiectum metaphysicae".

[54] *Ibid*. (fol. 138vQ–139rQ): "(…) statim postquam de eo conceptum est esse, dubitat homo de eo quod est simpliciter conceptum non determinatum, dubitat, inquam, si est substantia vel accidens (…). Et illud quod sic dubitatur est id quod quaeritur quaestione quid est, cuius cognitio, antequam possit haberi aut aggredi, necessario praesupponit cognitionem si est".

eral concept of "thing" in the sense of *reor*, *reris* is the confused cognition of a thing that precedes scientific knowledge. The answer to the basic question of *scientia*, "whether something is" (*si est*), is *res* in the sense of *ratitudo*. This second mode is identified with the notion of "being".

Henry understands "being", though it is the answer to the question *si est*, in a quidditative sense. *Ens* is synonymous with "quidditative being" (*esse quidditativum*); it is a *res* in the sense of *ratitudo*, for the phrases "quidditative being" and "fixed being" are convertible.[55] In fact, Henry identifies the notion of "being" with Avicenna's concept of "thing", although he knows very well that for the Arab philosopher these notions are distinct.

In his third *Quodlibet*, Henry paraphrases the text from Avicenna's *Metaphysics* to the effect that the concept of *res*, signifying the proper *certitudo* of a thing, is different from the concept whereby *esse* is ascribed to it. Henry's reading even assigns priority to the former notion: "thing" is the absolutely first concept (*prima simpliciter*); its concomitant is "being", by reason of which the *certitudo* of a thing has existence in the mind or in the extramental world.[56] In the same *Quodlibet*, the key to Henry's identification of "thing" and "being" becomes perceptible. He interprets the *esse proprium*, a concept that Avicenna tentatively suggested in his description of the *certitudo* of a thing, as a distinctive kind of being, the *esse essentiae*.[57] The "essential being" of a thing is its proper reality that has to be distinguished from its "actual existence" (*esse existentiae*), since the essence is indeterminate and prior to any existence. A thing can thus be called "being" (*ens*), not because it actually exists, but insofar as it has an essence or a quiddity capable to extramental existence. Since "essential being" is considered prior to "actual existence", the concept of "being" referring to the *esse essentiae* is what is first conceived by the intellect. This conclusion corresponds with Henry's account of the transcendental

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[55] *Ibid*., a. 34, q. 2 (ed. Macken, p. 174): "(…) ratio entis sive esse quidditativi, quae convenit ei ex respectu ad formam divini exemplaris, a quo accipitur ratio rei dictae a ratitudine, quae eadem est cum ratione entis quidditativi. Ex eo enim est ratum quid, quo est quidditativum quid, et e converso".

[56] Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* III, q. 9 (ed. Paris 1518, Vol. I, fol. 61rO): "Quoniam intentio de re est intentio prima simpliciter, ad quam concomitatur intentio de esse, ex hoc scilicet quod certitudo rei qua est id quod est, secundum se habet esse in anima (…) aut in singularibus extra, et sequitur secundum rationem intelligendi intentio de esse intentionem de re".

[57] *Ibid.* Cf. P. Porro, "Possibilità ed *esse essentiae* in Enrico di Gand", in: W. Vanhamel (ed.), *Henry of Ghent*, pp. 211–253.

concept of "being" in the *Summa* art. 34, q. 3, in which he, unlike Aquinas, understands *ens* from the essential "reality", not from its "actuality". He determines the concept of "being" through the term *certitudo*, by which Avicenna explicated the signification of the notion *res*. This identification is the explanation for the fact that "thing" is not listed as a distinct transcendental in Henry's doctrine.

2. "Being" (*ens*) is the first concept of the intellect. In his first account of the transcendentals in the *Summa* art. 34, q. 3, Henry specifies this claim by adding the phrase *obiective* in order to distinguish the primacy of "being" from that of "true". In the preceding question he uses the same phrase to characterize the primacy of the concept of *ens* as distinct from that of *res*. The *ratio* of "thing" in the sense of *res a reor* is the first in any created being, but the *ratio* of *ens* or "quidditative being" is the first concept that is in the intellect in the manner of an object (*obiective*), for "what a thing is" (*quid est*) is the "proper object" (*proprium obiectum*) of the intellect, as the Philosopher states. Therefore the *ratio* of "thing" in the sense of *reor, reris* cannot be conceived by the intellect, although it can be by the imaginative power (*imaginatio*), unless under the aspect of quidditative being.[58]

There does not appear to be an insoluble tension between the primacy of "being" and that of "thing". Nor is the suggestion correct that the kernel of the problem of being in Henry is "the ambiguity of *res*", insofar as it is unclear whether the transcendental character of being is based on the universality of the first object of the intellect (*res a reor*) or on its ontological fixity (*res a ratitudine*).[59] We can establish that in this respect there is no ambiguity at all in Henry: the first object of the intellect is "real being".

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[58] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 34, q. 2 (ed. Macken, pp. 174–175): "sciendum quod ratio rei a reor reris prima est in unoquoque ente creato, et super illam rationem rei prima ratio quae fundatur, est ratio entis sive esse quidditativi (…). Ita quod ratio entis sit ratio primi conceptus obiective in intellectu, quia 'quod quid est, est proprium obiectum intellectus' secundum Philosophum, ut etiam ratio rei a reor dictae non potest concipi ab intellectu—licet possit ab imaginatione—nisi sub ratione entis quidditativi".

[59] O. Boulnois, *Être et représentation*, p. 433: "L'ambiguité de la *res* constitue le nœud du problème de l'être chez Henri: le caractère transcendantal de l'être est-il fondé sur l'universalité du premier objet de l'intellect (*res a reor*), ou sur la consistance de sa participation à Dieu (*res a ratitudine*)?"

3. Henry clearly states that the subject of metaphysics is being as such or *ens simpliciter*. Insofar as the term "subject" indicates the true "point of departure", one could say that "le point de départ" of Henry's metaphysics is not, as Jean Paulus claims, an idea or something mental, but real or "objective" being. The relation Henry formulates between knowledge and reality is of an essentially different nature than a transcendental form in the Kantian sense, attributed by Paulus to the most common concept of *res*. It also appears that in Henry First Philosophy is not a "tinology" or the science of thing in general, but the science of being-as-being and its transcendental properties.[60] The real innovation concerns the quidditative concept of "being"; his metaphysics is not a study of what actually exists but of essential being.[61]

Henry knows the traditional considerations for the ontological conception of metaphysics, but also advances an interesting new argument that is based on the identification of the *subiectum* of metaphysics with the *obiectum* of the human intellect. Metaphysics is First Philosophy, because it deals with what is first conceived by the mind, "being as being". Since what is first known by a faculty is the proper "object" of that faculty, the "subject" of the most general science coincides with the proper object of the human intellect.[62]

7.3 The transcendentals and the divine

7.3.1 *The analogical community of being*

Henry's onto-theological conception of metaphysics is distinct from Aquinas's position. The latter interpreted the relation of God to the subject of this science as a causal relation: God is the cause of being qua being or *ens commune*. Henry rejects this view on Avicennian grounds: First Philosophy does not consider the principles of being as being, because being taken absolutely has no principle. Invoking the relevant passage in Avicenna's *Metaphysics*, he explains that the

[60] Cf. the conclusion in M. Pickavé, *Heinrich von Gent über Metaphysik als erste Wissenschaft*, pp. 364–367, on metaphysics as a "transcendental science".

[61] Cf. J. Gómez Caffarena, *Ser participado y ser subsistente en la metafisica de Enrique de Gante*, Rome 1958 (Analecta Gregoriana, 93).

[62] For this identification, cf. M. Pickavé, "Heinrich von Gent über das Subjekt der Metaphysik als Ersterkanntes", in: *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 12 (2001), pp. 493–522, in particular p. 512.

subject contains under itself both being that is the principle and the being that is the effect of the principle. God thus is not outside the *ens commune* of the subject of metaphysics, but part of it.[63] Consequently, Henry understands this commonness of being in a more comprehensive manner than Aquinas does. The subject of metaphysics is "being taken in its broadest sense, analogously common (*commune analogum*) to the creator and the creature".[64] In this specification of the subject a shift in the idea of the analogy of being becomes manifest. Aquinas teaches an analogy between created being as the subject of metaphysics and the divine being, Henry, however, understands the analogy *within* the most common concept of "being".

1. Henry explains his doctrine of analogy in the *Summa* art. 21, q. 2, where he discusses the question "Whether God has being in common (*in esse communicat*) with creatures?", that is, "Whether being is something common to God and creatures?"[65] He argues that "being" (*ens*) does not signify one notion (*intentio*) common to substance and accidents, because the categories have no real community (*communitas realis*) of being. A fortiori it holds for the creator and creature that they have no reality in common. Hence, if being is predicated of God and creatures, this is by a commonality of name only (*sola nominis communitas*).[66] Yet this argument does not mean that being is said

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[63] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 7, q. 5 ad 2 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 54rH): "(…) licet enim deus sit pars subiecti metaphysicae inquantum cognoscibilis est in scientia philosophica ex puris naturalibus (…)". *Ibid.*, q. 6 ad 2 (fol. 56rS): "deus cadit sub subiecto metaphysicae, quod est ens simpliciter".

[64] *Ibid.*, a. 21, q. 3 (126rD): "Ens simpliciter dictum, ut commune ad ens actu et ens potentia, est ens largissimo modo acceptum, quod secundum Avicennam est subiectum metaphysicae, et est commune analogum ad creatorem et creaturam, continens sub se ens principium et ens principiatum, quia secundum Avicennam, non omne ens est principium, nec cuiuslibet entis est principium". Cf. *ibid.*, a. 19, q. 1 ad 4 (115vL): "Unde prima philosophia quae est de ente simpliciter ut de subiecto non considerat principia aliqua subiecti, quia non habet ulla. Ens enim simpliciter, ut dicit Avicenna primo Metaphysicae suae, non habet principium, sed est principium aliquibus entibus. Quapropter illa scientia non inquirit principia entis absolute, sed alicuius entium".

[65] For Henry's doctrine of analogy, cf. J. Paulus, *Henri de Gand*, pp. 52–66. J. Decorte, "Henry of Ghent on Analogy. Critical Reflections on Jean Paulus' Interpretation", in: W. Vanhamel (ed.), *Henry of Ghent*, pp. 71–105. S. D. Dumont, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus", in: J. Marenbon (ed.), *Routledge History of Philosophy*, Vol. III: *Medieval Philosophy*, London – New York 1998, pp. 298–307.

[66] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 21, q. 2 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 124vF). For the English translation, cf. J. Decorte / R. J. Teske (transl.), *Henry of Ghent's 'Summa'. The Questions on God's Existence and Essence (Articles 21–24)*, Paris – Leuven – Dudley, Mass., 2005 (Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations, 5).

purely equivocally of them, for another kind of community between God and creature exists.

Henry goes on to explain that one thing can agree in form with another in two ways. The terminology of his distinction has a Franciscan background, since it is taken from the *Summa*, attributed to Alexander of Hales (see ch. 4.1). In one way, there is an agreement in form according to the same *ratio*, which is called "an agreement of likeness" (*convenientia similitudinis*), such as there is between two white things that participate in whiteness; it is an "agreement of univocity". In the second way, there is an agreement according to different *rationes*; it is an "agreement of imitation" (*convenientia imitationis*), as it is found in causes and their effects. Hence, since God is the efficient cause of all creatures, every creature necessarily has an agreement by imitation with God. This is an agreement in being, because the divine form is being itself (*ipsum esse*).[67]

Being, therefore, does not belong to God and creatures univocally because it does not belong to them according to the same form, that is, by an agreement of likeness. Nor does it belong to them in a purely equivocal sense, but being belongs to God and creatures in a middle way, namely analogically, because it signifies primarily and principally the form by which God has being, and signifies as ordered to and in relation to what is primary the form by which a creature has being. Thus, if taken in its most common sense, "being" primarily signifies God and secondarily creatures.[68]

So far Henry's account is traditional and not different from Aquinas's doctrine. He upholds the common opinion that analogy is intermediate between univocity and equivocity; that an analogous term is said according to different but connected meanings; and that the causal relationship between God and creatures is the ontological basis of the analogical community of being. Yet in his reply to an objection, Henry goes a step further with respect to the conceptual unity—a crucial element in any doctrine of analogy. This additional step makes his version of analogy different from contemporary accounts.

2. Henry advances an objection in favour of a stronger community in being between God and creatures than he defends. The argument is

[67] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 21, q. 2 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 124vG–H).
[68] *Ibid.* (fol. 124vI).

interesting because it is based on Avicenna's doctrine of the primary notions: what is said of many things and is understood by itself is something really common (*aliquid reale commune*) to those things of which it is predicated, since every concept is founded on something. "Being" is of this kind, for according to Avicenna "being is impressed in the soul by a first impression", even before an understanding of either a creature or God is impressed.[69] Henry of Ghent was the first to present Avicenna as a proponent of the univocity of the concept of being; the idea of a first known seems to imply this view, since the cognitive primacy of being suggests a real community between things. This objection must have been weighty for Henry, because his reply to the argument is nearly as extensive as his answer to the question itself.

Henry accepts the major premise of the argument that a real concept is founded on a real community. He denies, however, that the cognitive priority of "being" has to be understood in the sense that "being taken absolutely" (*ens simpliciter*), by which we grasp that something is, is conceived before the concept of being proper to God or proper to a creature. "Being without qualification" can never be conceived as one simple concept, common to God and creature. If one conceives something, it is either what pertains to the being of God alone, or what pertains to the being of a creature alone. Therefore, every real concept (*conceptus realis*) of being either is a concept of God or a concept of a creature, but not the concept of something common to them.[70]

Henry criticizes thinkers who ignored the "multiplicity of being" and were unable to distinguish the being of the Creator from the being of the creature. Plato was such a philosopher, as he claimed that being (*ens*) is a genus, as if the term "being" belongs to one common concept. The (Platonic) thesis of the univocity of being is untenable, since there is no real community in being between God and creature.[71]

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[69] *Ibid.* (fol. 124rE): "Tertio sic: Dictum de pluribus quod habet per se intellectum praeter intellectus illorum, est aliquid reale commune ad illos, quia omnis conceptus fundatur in re aliqua. Ens est huiusmodi, quia secundum Avicennam ens imprimitur impressione prima, etiam antequam in ipsa imprimitur intellectus aut creaturae aut dei. Ergo, etc.".

[70] *Ibid.* (fol. 124vO): "Ad tertium, quod ens simpliciter concipitur ante conceptum entis, quod est deus aut creatura, dicendum quod non est verum. (…) Omnis ergo conceptus realis quo aliquid rei concipitur concipiendo esse simpliciter, aut est conceptus rei quae deus est, aut quae creatura est, non alicuius communis ad utrumque".

[71] *Ibid.* (fol. 124vO): "Videtur tamen hoc non potentibus distinguere multiplicitatem entis et esse creatoris ab esse creaturae, sicut nec potuit Plato ponens ens esse genus, tanquam sit nominis entis unum aliquid commune conceptum".

Does this conclusion imply that the transcendental concept of being disintegrates into two distinct concepts corresponding to the diverse realities of divine being and created being? Henry attempts to explain why something common seems to be conceived by the concept of "being". This is only due to the fact that being has not distinctly been conceived but indeterminately (*indeterminate*), not determined to the being of God or to the being of the creature. In this sense, Henry states, Avicenna's teaching that the concept of being is prior to the concept of God or the creature must be understood—under the proviso, to be true, that he understood well (*si bene intellexit*).[72]

Henry then shows that in the concept of "undetermined being" different modes of indeterminacy are latent. The indetermination is in fact twofold, negative with respect to the being of God, and privative with respect to the being of the creature. There is a "negative indetermination" in conceiving undetermined being which belongs to God, since the being of God is infinite and naturally indeterminable; there is a "privative indetermination" in conceiving undetermined being which belongs to the creature, since the being of a creature is naturally disposed to be determined by its proper nature.[73]

The concept of "undetermined being" is not a simple concept of "being absolutely"; it is actually a confusion of the two ways in which being is undetermined—a confusion that arises from the similarity between them. The concept does not posit anything positive in reality common to God and creature, but only something negative, the removal of determination.[74]

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[72] *Ibid.* (fol. 124vP): "Quod autem nomine entis videatur concipi aliquid commune, est quia (…) cum concipitur esse absque eo quod determinate et distincte concipitur esse dei aut creaturae, illud non concipitur nisi indeterminate, scilicet non determinando intellectum ad esse dei vel esse creaturae. Et habendo respectum ad distinctum intellectum dei aut creaturae intellexit Avicenna, si bene intellexit, quod intellectus entis prior est intellectu dei aut creaturae".

[73] *Ibid.* (fol. 124vP): "Intelligendum tamen quod illa determinatio alia est respectu esse dei et alia respectu esse creaturae, quia duplex est indeterminatio: una negativa, altera vero privativa dicta (…)".

[74] *Ibid.* (fol. 125rS): "Et quia indeterminatio per abnegationem et per privationem propinquae sunt, quia ambae tollunt determinationem (…), ideo non potentes distinguere inter huiusmodi diversa pro eodem concipiunt esse simpliciter et esse indeterminatum, (…) sive sit dei sive creaturae. (…) quae tamen in rei veritate non faciunt unum conceptum. Et ideo est error in illius conceptu. Verus enim conceptus primo concipiendo esse simpliciter indeterminatum quod ratione suae indeterminationis nihil ponit omnino neque determinat, ut ex hoc nihil sit re commune deo et creaturae positivum, sed negativum solum".

Henry's reply to the objection is a wordy effort to combine the doctrine of the analogy of being with Avicenna's teaching on being as the first concept of the intellect. Avicenna's doctrine meant a challenge, for the first concept does not determine being to this or that being (*hoc vel illud*), to creator or created, and thus seems to require a minimum of univocity. In order to explain the analogical community of being Henry not only maintains the common view that the distinct concepts of divine being and created being are related as primary and secondary in the predication of being, but also holds that these distinct concepts are united in the confused, common concept of "undetermined being".

This new element in Henry's doctrine of analogy implies a more comprehensive understanding of being than in Aquinas, who conceives transcendental being as that which goes through all categories. Henry conceives a "more general being" (*ens generalius*) which is analogically common to the creator and the being that is found in the ten categories.[75] The importance of this concept becomes clear in the new way to God that Henry sketches.

7.3.2 *A new way to God from the first concepts*[76]

A synthesis of Avicenna and Augustine

In the *Summa* art. 22, q. 5, Henry raises the question: "Whether a human being can know that God exists (*Deum esse*) by another way than from creatures?" The phrase "by another way" (*alia via*) does not refer to a path different from the road of natural reason (*via naturalis rationis*), to wit, the path of "supernatural revelation". The knowledge meant is philosophical, but proceeds by a different way than the traditional proofs of God's existence that Henry had enumerated in the

[75] *Ibid.*, a. 25, q. 1 (fol. 148vK): "Si intelligamus ens divisum solum illud quod consequitur praedicamenta, illud non convenit deo, sed unum quod convenit deo est aliud unum, quod scilicet analogatur cum ente generaliori, quod scilicet est commune analogum creatori et illi enti quod consequitur X predicament".

[76] Cf. A. C. Pegis, "Toward a New Way to God: Henry of Ghent", in: *Mediaeval Studies* 30 (1968), pp. 226–247; 31 (1969), pp. 93–116; 33 (1971), pp. 158–179. P. Porro, *Enrico di Gand. La via delle proposizioni universali*. M. Pickavé, *Heinrich von Gent über Metaphysik als erste Wissenschaft*, pp. 307–361.

preceding q. 4, such as Aquinas's "five ways" (*quinque viae*) in his *Summa theologiae* (I, q. 2, art. 3).[77]

The reason for the question is, as Henry indicates, Avicenna's opinion that in addition to the knowledge of God we have "a posteriori" from sensible things, another knowledge is possible "a priori". The terms *a posteriori* and *a priori* are not derived from Avicenna's account, but are Henry's own expressions. He cites verbatim the text in the first treatise of Avicenna's *Metaphysics* (I, c. 3), in which the Arab philosopher promises such knowledge: "Afterwards it will be shown to you that we have a way of establishing the first principle, not by way of testimony of sensible things (*non ex via testificationis sensibilium*), but by way of universal intelligible propositions (*ex via propositionum universalium intelligibilium*)".[78]

The background of Avicenna's view is his refusal of the theological conception of First Philosophy (see ch. 2.4.1). God cannot be the subject of metaphysics, because the existence of the subject is not proven but presupposed in the science in question; God's existence, however, is "what is sought" and demonstrated in First Philosophy. Henry reports the criticism of Averroes who was of the opinion that "Avicenna was gravely mistaken" by asserting that the first philosopher must demonstrate the existence of the first principle, since this is rather the proper task of the natural philosopher; God's existence can only be proven by the (Aristotelian) way of motion. But to Henry's mind this criticism would have been justified if Avicenna thought that the knowledge of "the universal propositions" was not obtained from sensible creatures—there is for man no other way of proving the existence of God except from sensible things.[79] But what can then be meant by an "a priori" knowledge of God?

Henry explains Avicenna's claim of "another way" to God by distinguishing three ways in which it is possible to know whether a thing exists: from its presence, from the knowledge of its essence, or from the connection and dependence of the existence of other things on the thing whose existence is in question. Concerning the existence of God, the first way of an immediate vision is impossible for man by natural means; the third way is not relevant, since it concerns proofs based

[77] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 22, q. 5 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 134rB).
[78] *Ibid.* (fol. 134r-vB). Cf. Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, I, c. 3 (ed. Van Riet, pp. 20–21).
[79] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 22, q. 5 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 134vB).

on the testimony of sensible things. The second way is the crucial one for Henry, because in God alone the quiddity includes the being of existence (*esse existentiae*) and knowledge of God's existence is thus possible by knowing his quiddity or essence. This cognition is meant by Avicenna when he states that God's existence can be demonstrated "by way of universal intelligible propositions".[80]

Avicenna does not elaborate on this other "way", but Henry presents a remarkable interpretation of it. He first establishes that "the universal propositions" are about "being", "one", "good" and identifies them with the Avicennian first concepts of the intellect. "According to Avicenna and the truth of things" (*secundum Avicennam et secundum rei veritatem*), the more simple concepts are, the more prior they are, and, therefore, "one", "thing" and such concepts are immediately impressed in the soul.[81]

Henry next connects the firstness of these notions with a divine moment in them. In these concepts, he states, man can perceive being absolutely (*ens simpliciter*) and the true or the good absolutely. Such a reality is necessarily something subsisting in itself, not something participating in another. And what is such, is being itself, is the good itself, is the truth itself, is God himself. Henry's authority for the theological transformation of the first concepts is Augustine. He refers to book VIII of *De trinitate*, in which Augustine attempts to bring the soul to a vision of the divine Trinity through the concept of "goodness" and describes the reduction of the creaturely good to God: Look at "this" good (*bonum hoc*) and "that" good (*bonum illud*). Take away the "this" and "that", and see, if you can, the good itself (*ipsum bonum*) without those things which are good by participation. In that way you will see God, who is not good by some other good, but is the good of every good (*bonum omnis boni*). "According to Augustine" (*secundum Augustinum*), Henry observes, God is understood when one understands the being of every being and the good as such of every good.[82]

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[80] *Ibid.* (fol. 134vC).

[81] *Ibid.* (fol. 134vD): "Sunt autem propositiones illae universales de ente, uno, et bono, et primis rerum intentionibus quae primo concipiuntur ab intellectu (…). Et ita cum secundum Avicennam et secundum rei veritatem conceptus quanto sunt simpliciores, tanto sunt priores, et ideo unum, res, et talia 'statim imprimuntur in anima, prima impressione quae non acquiritur ex aliis notioribus se'".

[82] *Ibid.* (fol. 134vD): "(…) in quibus [*sc.* primis intentionibus] potest homo percipere ens simpliciter, bonum aut verum simpliciter. Tale autem est necessario subsistens quid in se, non in alio participatum. Et quod tale est, ipsum esse est, ipsum

Henry concludes that the new way to God is achieved through a synthesis of Avicenna and Augustine: "Hence, *secundum Avicennam et Augustinum*, it is possible to know that God exists on the basis of such concepts of universal propositions, not by way of the testimony of the senses". Henry adds that this other way is not completely different from the traditional proofs for God's existence, because it also takes its origin from the knowledge of the essence of creatures. From the truth and the goodness of the creature one understands the true and good *simpliciter*.[83]

But why does Henry call this other way to God "a priori", if it also takes its origin from creatures? The term *a priori* cannot have the Kantian sense of knowledge that is separated from and independent of any experience. Henry's "a priori" means rather that the demonstration rests on what is first conceived, on the first concepts of the intellect or transcendentals. But how this "other way" precisely proceeds, is not explicated in this text in the *Summa*.

The three degrees of quidditative knowledge of God

1. Some clarification is offered later in the *Summa*, in the context of Henry's analysis of the human knowledge of God's quiddity. In art. 24, q. 6, he discusses the question "Whether what God is (*quid est Deus*) can be known from creatures?" The possibility of a quidditative knowledge of God by natural reason was explicitly denied by Aquinas at the beginning of his *Summa theologiae* (I, q. 3, prol.); the philosopher can answer the question of whether God is, but not *what* He is. Henry, however, also distances himself from Aquinas with regard to this.

Henry starts his reply with opposing the physical and the metaphysical "way" toward knowledge of God. Both ways depart from

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bonum est, ipsa veritas est, ipse deus est, secundum quod dicit Augustinus octavo *De trinitate* (…). (…) et secundum Augustinum, intelligendo ens omnis entis et bonum simpliciter omnis boni, intelligitur deus". Cf. Augustine, *De trinitate*, VIII, c. 3, n. 4 (ed. W. J. Mountain / F. Glorie, Turnhout 1968 (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina, 50), p. 272).

[83] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 22, q. 5 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 134vD–E): "Ideo ex talibus conceptibus propositionum universalium contingit secundum Avicennam et Augustinum intelligere et scire Deum esse, non ex via testificationis sensibilium, quod proculdubio verum est. (…) Non tamen est omnino iste alius modus a via cognoscendi Deum esse per creaturas, quia iste modus ortum sumit a cognitione essentiae creaturae. Ex veritate enim et bonitate creaturae intelligimus verum et bonum simpliciter".

the material creatures, but the natural philosopher considers them insofar as they are moveable, that is, in terms of their being a natural substance. In this way it can be proven from the relation of effect to cause and of something moved to its mover "that" God exists. Aquinas's "five ways" to God are typical of this description of a physical approach. The metaphysician, by contrast, considers the material creature insofar as it is a being and substance as such. In this way not only knowledge *that* God exists is obtained—though by "another way" than by deduction from creatures—, but also cognition of *what* He is.[84] Henry's additional remark on "the other way" refers to the "way" from the first concepts he had discussed in the *Summa* art. 22, q. 5. No other medieval thinker takes Avicenna's claim that the proof of God's existence must be metaphysical so seriously.

Is, however, a quidditative knowledge of God possible by natural reason? Earlier in the *Summa* (art. 24, q. 3), Henry had analyzed the different stages in the process of scientific knowledge on the basis of the difference between the questions *si est* and *quid est*. He sees the order of these questions as a process of increasing quidditative determination (see 7.2.3). Henry now goes back to this conclusion: "To the extent that one knows whether He [God] is one knows what He is, and the converse, as was stated above". In the case of God, a *per se* knowledge of whether He is (*si est*), that is, a cognition from the nature of the object in itself, is impossible in this life and, consequently, a knowledge of what He is. But a knowledge of the *si est* according to something accidental (*secundum accidens*) is possible, and likewise such a knowledge of the *quid est*, namely, by abstracting from creatures the nature of some general attribute of God.[85]

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[84] *Ibid.*, a. 24, q. 6 (fol. 141r–vN): "Sciendum quod ex substantiis materialibus sensibilibus dupliciter potest acquiri cognitio aliqua de substantia supernaturali insensibili. Uno modo inquantum mobilis et sensibilis, hoc est, secundum quod est substantia naturalis, et de consideratione physici. Alio modo secundum quod est ens et substantia simpliciter, et de consideratione metaphysici. Primo modo ex substantiis sensibilibus creatis habetur cognitio de deo quia sit, scilicet ex collatione causati ad causam, mobilis ad moventem. Et sic probatio quia deus est per se pertinet ad physicum et naturalem philosophum, et non ad metaphysicum (…). Secundo vero modo ex substantiis sensibilibus creatis habetur nostra cognitio de deo et quia sit, alia scilicet via quam deductione ex creaturis, de qua sermo habitus est supra, et etiam quid sit, si qua cognitio de deo quid sit a nobis in praesenti habeatur".

[85] *Ibid.* (fol. 141vN). Cf. S. D. Dumont, "The *quaestio si est* and the Metaphysical Proof for the Existence of God according to Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus", in: *Franziskanische Studien* 66 (1984), pp. 335–367.

Henry explains the possibility of a quidditative knowledge of God from creatures through the analogical commonness of the first concepts. A creature has only a likeness to the divine quiddity insofar as it is being, good, one, true, and beautiful, concepts that are common to the creator and the creature according to some analogy. The likeness does not consists in the particular being of the divine nature considered in itself, but in the universal being of God's attributes in which the creatures somehow share. Therefore, the universal form of a creature can only lead to knowledge of the divine quiddity under the aspect of some general attribute of it. It is a cognition that is indistinct and in the universal.[86]

2. Henry distinguishes three "modes" (*modi*) in the knowledge of the divine quiddity through its general attributes: "most generally", "more generally" and "generally", and in this order, for intellectual cognition begins from what is more confused and better known to us. We restrict ourselves to the analysis of the first mode, since it in fact is an elaboration of "the other way" to God "by way of universal intelligible propositions", suggested in the *Summa* art. 22, q. 5.

Our intellect understands the quiddity of God most generally by understanding "that which has excellence and dignity in a creature". This occurs in the first concepts of the intellect, which at the same time express ontological perfections, since they are attributed to God and creatures—a confirmation of the synthesis of Avicenna and Augustine, achieved by Henry. He cites Augustine's reduction of the creaturely good ("this" or "that" good) to the subsistent good that is God in book VIII of *De trinitate*. Since in Henry's reading the Augustinian reduction shows that the good can be understood in three manners, he concludes that the first mode of quidditative knowledge has three degrees (*gradus*), through any one of which it is possible to understand God.[87]

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[86] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 24, q. 6 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 141rQ): "Creatura (…) solum habet rationem similis ad ipsam [*sc.* divinam quiditatem] ut est ens, bonum, unum, verum, pulchrum etc. huiusmodi, quae secundum aliquam rationem analogiae sunt communia creatori et creaturae, et hoc non in esse particulari, quo sunt ipsa divina quiditas, sed solum in esse universali, quo sunt substantialia eius attributa. Idcirco species universalis creaturae in cognitionem divinae quiditatis ut habet se in esse naturae suae particulari, nullo modo deducere potest, sed solum deducere potest in eius cognitionem sub ratione alicuius generalis attributi eius. Et hoc est cognoscere de deo quid est, in universali et secundum accidens solum".

[87] *Ibid.* (fol. 142vT–V): "Et ut a confuso magis, et ita a nobis magis noto, incipiamus, generalissime, et modo summe confuso intelligimus quiditatem dei in suis

The first degree of quidditative knowledge is the perception of a particular good, "this good" (*hoc bonum*), which is most indistinct from a creature. The phrase "this good" expresses two things, both that it is "good" and that it is "this". That it is said to be "this" belongs to the creature; that it is said to be "good" is common to the creator and the creature.[88]

The second degree of quidditative knowledge is obtained by the abstraction of the universal from the particular, as, for instance, "good" from "this" or "that" good. Then we consider the common and universal good (*commune et universale bonum*) as participated in by and existing in this or that particular good. Marks of the second degree of understanding "good" are that "good" is less limited (*contractum*) to the creature than in the first degree; that it belongs to the first intentions of the intellect; and that it is analogically common to God and creature.[89] Henry next brings the distinctive feature of his idea of analogy into the argument. Although the good of the creator and the good of the creature in themselves produce different concepts, our intellect, nevertheless, conceives both concepts in a confused way as one, because they are very close to one another. And thus in this second degree, our intellect understands the goodness of God, which is his quiddity, in a confused way and not distinctly from the good of the creature.[90]

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attributis, intelligendo id quod est excellentiae et dignitatis in creatura. Et est iste modus cognoscendi divinam essentiam quid sit, ille de quo loquitur Augustinus octavo *De trinitate* (…). Vide ergo ex dictis Augustini, quod contingit bonum intelligere tripliciter: ut iste primus modus tres gradus in se habeat et quolobet illorum intelligere Deum".

[88] *Ibid.* (fol. 142vV): "Uno modo intelligendo hoc bonum et hoc summe indistincte a creatura. Dicendo enim hoc bonum duo dico et quia bonum et quia hoc. Quod dicitur hoc, hoc est creaturae; quod dicitur bonum, hoc est commune creatori et creaturae".

[89] *Ibid.* (fol. 142vS): "Ad cuius intellectum sciendum quod duplex est abstractio formae per intellectum a supposito participante formam. Uno modo, ut relatae ad supposita (…). Considerata primo modo est abstractio universalis a particulari, ut boni ab hoc bono et ab illo (…). (142vV) A quo si subtraxeris hoc et illud, est secundus modus intelligendi bonum, scilicet, minus contractum ad creaturam quam prius, et est commune analogum ad deum et creaturam, et est de primis intentionibus quae per se et primo concipit intellectus de rebus, ut sunt unum et ens".

[90] *Ibid.* (fol. 142vV): "Et licet secundum se diversos intellectus distinctos faciunt bonum creatoris et bonum creaturae, sicut et ens de deo et de creatura, quia tamen proximi sunt, intellectus noster concipit modo confuso utrumque ut unum. Et sic isto modo adhuc intelligit bonitatem dei quae est eius quiditas, modo confuso et indistincto a bono creaturae".

The third degree of the most general quidditative knowledge of God is achieved by another kind of abstraction, the complete separation of a form from matter, for example, understanding the good as not existing in another but as subsisting in itself (*bonum subsistens*). This third degree concerns the good that is totally abstracted from the good of the creature; it is the good of the creator only. When this has been seen, God, as Augustine says, is seen more closely.[91]

Since under the influence of the Augustinian model Henry's explanation of the quidditative knowledge of God in his general attributes was focused on the notion of "good", he finally generalizes his conclusion. As with the understanding of "good", it is with the understanding of "being", "true", "beautiful", "just", and the other intentions that express some dignity and nobility in the creator and creatures. For in all these intentions the *ratio* of the first true, beautiful, just, etc. is understood.[92] It is noteworthy that Henry, in his general conclusion, includes the notions of "beautiful" and "just" into the first concepts (or transcendentals). This inclusion is another effect of the Augustinian moment in Henry's synthesis, as a result of which first concepts are understood as ontological perfections ("intentions that express some dignity and nobility") common to God and creature.[93]

7.3.3 *God as what is first known*

Does the conclusion that the most general knowledge of God's quiddity is obtained in the first concepts of the intellect not imply that God

[91] *Ibid.* (fol. 142vS): "Alio modo ut absolutae a suppositis (…). Secundo modo est abstractio formae omnino a materia consideratae, scilicet ut in se subsistentis, ut boni ab omni participante bonum, quod est substantialiter, et in se subsistens bonum (…). (142vV) Quod si potueris distinguere unum ab altero, intelligendo bonum ut subsistens et non in altero existens (…), iste est tertius modus intelligendi bonum, scilicet omnino abstractum a bono creaturae, quod est bonum solius creatoris, quo perspecto magis de prope perspicitur deus, ut dicit Augustinus".

[92] *Ibid.* (fol. 142vV): "Et sicut est de intellectu boni, ita est de intellectu entis, veri, pulchri, iusti, et caeterarum intentionum, quae aliquid dignitatis et nobilitatis dicunt in creatore et creaturis. In omnibus enim illis intelligitur ratio primi veri, pulchri, et iusti, et caeterorum huiusmodi".

[93] Cf. *Ibid.*, a. 24, q. 7, in contrarium (fol. 143vE): "Non enim potest iudicare intellectus de aliquo quod sit bonum aut iustum, et de caeteris conditionibus nobilitatis quae communiter conveniunt deo et creaturae, nisi cognoscendo quia bonum simpliciter et iustum, quod per se et non per aliud cognoscitur esse tale, ut vult Augustinus octavo *De trinitate*, *De vera religione*, *De soliloquiis*, et ubicumque loquitur de hac materia".

is somehow what is first known? Henry suggests this idea at the end of his account in the *Summa* art. 24, q. 6, where he makes a comparison between the corporeal eye and the intellect: just as the eye simultaneously perceives color and light and perceives color only by reason of light, although it judges the sight of color prior to that of light, the intellect simultaneously conceives in a confused way the *ratio* of the first good and that of the good in creatures, although it judges the good of the creature prior to the good of the creator.[94]

Interestingly, Bonaventure, in the *Itinerarium*, had made a similar comparison in his exposition of the thesis that God is what is first known (see ch. 4.2). After having concluded that the being which is first known must be the divine being, he expresses his astonishing about the blindness of the intellect which does not consider that which it sees first. Through a comparison Bonaventure makes clear that one has to distinguish between conscious and unconscious elements in human knowledge. Just as the eye is so fixed on the variety of colors that it does not see the light through which it perceives other things, likewise our intellect does not notice the being that is beyond all genera, even though it comes first to the mind. Thomas Aquinas had criticized the view that God is what is first known and rejected the Franciscan position, which maintains the identity of what is cognitively prior and of what is ontologically prior. But Henry explicitly approves this position in the *Summa* art. 24, q. 7 ("Whether God's quiddity is the first that a human being knows from creatures?").[95]

Crucial in Henry's reply is the distinction between two kinds of knowledge of God's quiddity from creatures, a "natural" cognition, that is, a knowledge of God which is immediately and naturally conceived with the first concepts of things, and a "rational" cogni-

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[94] *Ibid.*, a. 24, q. 6 (fol. 142vV).

[95] *Ibid.*, a. 24, q. 7 (fol. 143vE): "Utrum quiditas dei est primum quod homo ex creaturis cognoscit?" For the doctrine of God as what is first known, cf. M. Laarmann, *Deus, primum cognitum. Die Lehre von Gott als dem Ersterkannten des menschlichen Intellekts bei Heinrich von Gent*, Münster 1999 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 52), in particular pp. 289–311. S. P. Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance. Science and Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols., Leiden – Boston – Köln 2001 (Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 98). M. Pickavé, *Heinrich von Gent über Metaphysik als erste Wissenschaft*, pp. 129–181. W. Goris, *Absolute Beginners. Der mittelalterliche Beitrag zu einem Ausgang vom Unbedingten*, Leiden – Boston 2007 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 93), pp. 95–159.

tion which is obtained by means of discursive reasoning.[96] In rational cognition, what God is is not the first known but rather the last, for this quidditative knowledge pertains to the third degree in the most general mode of knowing God, the understanding of God as the subsistent good. This knowledge presupposes, as we have seen, a twofold abstraction, from "this" singular good and from the universal good. Thus, it is necessary to understand the good of the creature before the good of the creator is understood. What is first known in rational cognition is the creature.[97]

The natural cognition of what God is in the first concepts of things pertains to the first and second degree in the most general mode of knowing God. In this cognition, what God is is what is first grasped (*primum comprehensibile*) by the intellect. Henry's argument rests on the structure of human knowledge: it always begins from what is indeterminate; to the extent that an intelligible is indeterminate, the intellect naturally understands it earlier.[98] "Indetermination" is Henry's explanation of the analogical commonness of the first concepts, but, as we have seen, there are two kinds of "indetermination. "Privative" indetermination is typical of the good understood as universal good, since such a good is naturally able to be determined by "this" or "that" good; "negative" indetermination is typical of the good as subsisting good, since this cannot be determined. Henry simply claims that the indetermination of the latter good is greater than privative indetermination. The consequence of the general principle that our intellect always naturally grasps the indeterminate before the determinate is that the intellect co-understands in any good whatsoever prior the good that is indeterminate in the negative sense, which is God.[99]

Henry concludes that God's quiddity is the first object of the intellect in the first concepts. Nothing can be known in creatures to be true, good, beautiful, just, being, or one, unless by a natural priority it is known what is absolutely and indeterminately true, good, beautiful, just, being or one. Thus, the beginning and end of our knowledge

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[96] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 24, q. 7 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 144rF).
[97] *Ibid.* (fol. 144rF).
[98] *Ibid.* (fol. 144rG).
[99] *Ibid.* (fol. 144rH): "Ergo, cum semper intellectus noster naturaliter prius concipit indeterminatum quam determinatum (…), intellectus noster intelligendo bonum quodcunque in ipso naturaliter, prius cointelligit bonum negatione indeterminatum, et hoc est bonum quod deus est. Et sicut de bono, ita et de omnibus aliis de deo intellectis ex creaturis".

is in God, the beginning with regard to the most general knowledge of Him, the end with regard to the nude vision of Him. In this way Henry establishes the complete correspondence of the cognitive order and the ontological order: God is the principle and end of all things in cognitive being (*esse cognitivo*), just as He is their principle and end in the being of nature (*esse naturae*).[100]

But is Henry's claim that God is what is first known in natural cognition consistent with his claim that "being" is the first object of the intellect and is what is first known—a claim he advances in his account of the transcendentals, in the discussion on the primacy of *res* or *ens* and in his argument that metaphysics is First Philosophy, since it deals with what is first conceived by the mind, "being as being"? Henry himself raises a difficulty (*dubium*) as to his conclusion that God is what is first conceived: Is the knowledge of what is first known first in such a way that it is known distinctly and is distinguished from what is known through it?[101] The question presupposes a differentiation, by which Henry tries to overcome the tension between the claims concerning what is first known.

He notes that it is one thing to know (*cognoscere*) something, but another to distinguish (*discernere*) it from another thing in knowing it. Knowledge is any simple concept of a thing, even if the intellect is not aware (*advertat*) of the thing conceived; discrete cognition (*cognitio discretiva*), however, is knowledge with awareness by which one distinguishes one object known from another.[102] The distinction is meant to explain an aspect of human cognition of the divine, to which Bonaventure also refers in his exposition of the claim that God is the first known: the necessity of distinguishing between the conscious and unconscious dimension of knowledge.

God is not what is first known *distinctly*. In the most general knowledge of God's quiddity with respect to its first and second degree,

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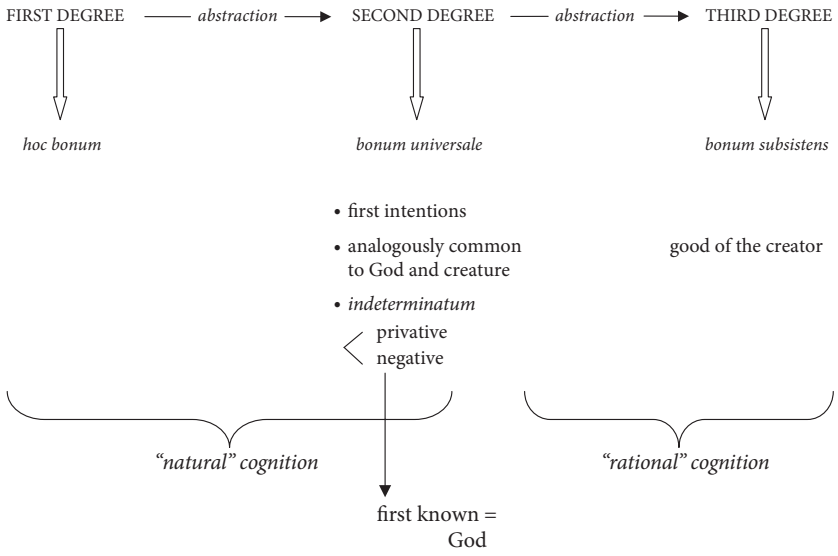
[100] *Ibid.* (fol. 144rH): "Absolute ergo dicendum quod in generalissimo modo intelligendi quid est deus, quoad primum et secundum eius gradum, quid est deus est primum obiectum quod ab humano intellectu ex creaturis habet intelligi, ut nihil possit cognosci in creaturis et ex creaturis, quia verum, bonum, pulchrum, iustum, ens, unum (…), nisi naturaliter prius, licet quandoque simul duratione, cognito eo quod est simpliciter et indeterminatum verum, bonum, pulchrum, iustum, ens, unum et huiusmodi, ut, scilicet, in ipso deo sit principium et finis nostrae cognitionis: principium quoad eius cognitionem generalissimam, finis quoad nudam visionem particularem, ut sic sit principium et finis omnium rerum in esse cognitivo, sicut est principium et finis earum in esse naturae".

[101] *Ibid.*, a. 24, q. 9 (fol. 146vX).

[102] *Ibid.*

God is what is first known, but by this cognition his quiddity is not distinguished from the quiddity of the creature.[103] God is conceived implicitly, confusedly and indeterminately.[104] The first *discrete* concept (*primus conceptus discretivus*) of natural knowledge is the *ratio* of being as such, which encloses both the concept of being that is the principle and the concept of being that is the effect of the principle.[105] The subject of metaphysics corresponds with the first distinct concept of the intellect.

To sum up, the quidditative knowledge of God in his general attributes proceeds in three stages, characterized by an increasing degree of making the divine explicit:



[103] *Ibid.* (fol. 146vY): "Isto autem modo cognoscendi de deo quod quid est, et ex hoc quod quid est in creaturis, dicendum quod, etsi deus isto modo cognoscendi cognoscatur et intelligatur ut primum cognitum et ratio cognoscendi aliud, non tamen cognitione ista quod quid est de deo, distinguitur ab eo quod quid est creaturae, quia sub nulla ratione determinante aut appropriante attributum illud deo concipitur".

[104] Cf. Th. Kobusch, "Gott und die Transzendentalien: Von der Erkenntnis des Inklusiven, Impliziten, Konfusen und Unbewußten", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen*, pp. 421–432.

[105] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 7, q. 6 ad 2 (ed. Paris 1520, Vol. I, fol. 56rR): "Et quia isto modo considerandi Deum ut scilicet consideratur in scientiis philosophicis, non est deus id quod primo mens in rebus concipit (dico cognitione discretiva discernendo ipsum ab aliis) (…). Immo primus conceptus discretivus naturalis cognitionis ex creaturis est ratio entis simpliciter, sub quo concipit secundario rationem entis principiati et principiantis".

Concluding observations

Henry of Ghent follows Aquinas's example in his accounts of the transcendentals, but does not follow his model of transcendentality. The distance from Aquinas's model is obvious in Henry's understanding of being, its analogical commonness, which consists in a confused concept of "undeterminate being", and his theological transformation of the primary notions. He connects Avicenna's doctrine of the primary notions of the intellect with the Augustinian "reduction" of the goodness of things to the divine goodness. Transcendental terms are in Henry's view not restricted to created being, but contain a divine moment. Through the theological transformation of the first concepts Henry's position has similarities to the Franciscan position. Typical features of Bonaventure's ascent of the mind to God were his idea of a "complete resolution" of things into the divine being and his claim that God is what is first known.

Henry's theological transformation of the first concepts made itself felt in two directions.[106] It influenced Meister Eckharts's conception of transcendentality, which identifies the most common notions with God (see ch. 8.2). But it also called for the critical reaction of Duns Scotus, for whom Henry became the main opponent. Scotus's discussions of the essential elements in Henry's onto-theological view—the analogical commonness of the concept of being, the new way to God from the first concepts, and God as what is first known—led to a fundamental reorientation of the doctrine of the transcendentals (see ch. IX).

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[106] Cf. Th. Kobusch, "Der neue Weg der Metaphysik: Heinrich von Gent, Meister Eckhart und Duns Scotus", in: L. Honnefelder / H. Möhle / S. Bullido del Barrio / A. Speer / Th. Kobusch (eds.), *Johannes Duns Scotus 1308–2008. Die philosophischen Perspektiven seines Werkes. Investigations into his Philosophy*, Münster 2010 (Archa Verbi Subsidia, 5), pp. 125–138.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GERMAN DOMINICAN SCHOOL: DIETRICH OF FREIBERG AND MEISTER ECKHART

In the historiography of the last decades, a new collective, the "German Dominican School", was introduced in connection with an ambitious edition project, referred to as the *Corpus philosophorum teutonicorum Medii Aevi*. The collective labels a group of thinkers who were related in one way or another to the *studium generale* of the Dominicans in Cologne, founded by the "*Teutonicus*" Albertus Magnus in 1248. The new designation is a recognition of the emergence of a German philosophical culture in the period between 1250 and 1350 and thus the expression of the growing importance of Germany as an intellectual centre beside Paris and Oxford. The key figure is Dietrich of Freiberg (d. ca. 1310); other names are Meister Eckhart (d. 1328), who published not only treatises in Latin but also in German, and Berthold of Moosburg (d. post 1361).[1]

The idea of a "German Dominican School" has found acceptance, but the concept is not unproblematic. The notion of "school", as, for instance, the "Thomist School", generally suggests a common way of thinking or orientation. There are certainly agreements between the views of the German Dominicans; they share, for example, an interest in Neoplatonic positions. The doctrinal divergences between them are, however, considerable and weighty. The theory of the transcendentals is a pertinent illustration of this. According to Berthold of Moosburg it is not simply a doctrine among other doctrines, but it stands for a fundamental philosophical option, which he completely rejects. Berthold is one of the sharpest critics of the doctrine of the transcendentals in the late Middle Ages, and it is plausible that he had the version expounded by Dietrich of Freiberg in mind. Meister

[1] Cf. L. Sturlese, "Albert der Grosse und die Deutsche philosophische Kultur des Mittelalters", in: *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 28 (1981), pp. 133–147 [reprinted in: id., *Homo divinus, Philosophische projekte in Deutschland zwischen Meister Eckhart und Heinrich Seuse*, Stuttgart 2007, pp. 1–13]. R. Imbach / C. Flüeler (eds.), *Albert der Große und die deutsche Dominikaner Schule. Philosophische Perspektiven*, in: *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 32 (1985).

Eckhart's concept of transcendentality again is quite different from Dietrich's; he presents a new model that was influenced by Henry of Ghent's onto-theological transformation. In view of this heterogeneity, one should not see "German Dominican School" as a designation for a "school of thought", but rather, like it has been suggested, as a "heuristic concept" that enables us to discern a common awareness of problems and some doctrinal relations.[2] Moreover, the importance of the "German" ambience for this group of thinkers should not be exaggerated: the writings of Dietrich of Freiberg are certainly not, as it has been claimed, a "key" to Eckhart's work;[3] their views should be considered in a European context.

In the present chapter we pay attention to Dietrich of Freiberg (8.1) and Meister Eckhart (8.2); Berthold of Moosburg will be dealt with in ch. XII ("Critiques of Transcendental Metaphysics"). Dietrich and Eckhart both held high administrative functions within the German province of the Dominicans and both became a master of theology in Paris: Dietrich in 1296, where he continued to teach until 1300, and Eckhart in the academic years 1302/3 and 1311/2.

8.1 Dietrich of Freiberg

8.1.1 *A "Copernican revolution" in the Middle Ages?*

1. A strong impulse to the modern interest in Dietrich's philosophy has been given by an essay of Kurt Flasch (published in 1972) with the intriguing title "Does medieval philosophy know the constitutive function of human thought?".[4] It was not a coincidence that this study appeared in the journal *Kantstudien*, for the recognition of the constructive role of the intellect in knowing reality has generally been taken as the achievement of Kant's "transcendental" philosophy. Flasch pursues the question whether medieval philosophy

[2] N. Largier, "Die 'deutsche Dominikanerschule'. Zur Problematik eines historiographischen Konzepts", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer (eds.), *Geistesleben im 13. Jahrhundert*, Berlin – New York 2000 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 27), pp. 202–213.

[3] So K. Flasch in his "Introduction" to *Dietrich von Freiberg, Schriften zur Intellekttheorie*, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. I (ed. B. Mojsisch), Hamburh 1977, p. XIX.

[4] K. Flasch, "Kennt die mittelalterliche Philosophie die konstitutive Funktion des menschlichen Denkens? Eine Untersuchung zu Dietrich von Freiberg", in: *Kantstudien* 63 (1972), pp. 182–206.

already made the attempt to account for our knowledge of things by assuming that objects must conform to our knowledge, not that all our knowledge must conform to the objects. Since this hypothesis was called by Kant, in the preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, a "Copernican revolution", the inquiry comes down to the question of whether an anticipation of such a "revolution" is to be found in the Middle Ages. Flasch's answer is affirmative: there is a medieval philosopher who teaches that the human intellect constitutes reality, namely Dietrich of Freiberg in his work *De origine rerum praedicamentalium*. "This 'Copernican revolution' connects Dietrich with Kant", he concludes.[5] Since this rediscovery, Dietrich's *Opera omnia* have been edited in four volumes and he has been promoted to one of "the most important thinkers" of the Middle Ages. There is thus every reason to give closer consideration to his work *De origine*, which has been labeled a "transcendental-logical treatise".[6]

2. *De origine rerum praedicamentalium* is Dietrich's first writing, dateable to around 1286. It is mostly ignored in the long history of the doctrine of the categories, but mistakenly so. Dietrich's treatise approaches the doctrine from a new perspective by examining the origin of the *res praedicamentales*, things that are determinable by the categories.[7] The syntagm *res praedicamentalis* is relatively young; a similar expression was employed by Henry of Ghent in his account of the categories. When Henry, in his analysis of the structure of "reality" that begins with the most common concept of *res*, comes to the categories, he distinguishes between the *res praedicamenti* and the *ratio praedicamenti*.[8]

Our primary interest is the central thesis of *De origine* that is elaborated in the final chapter: "The intellect is causal principle of some

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[5] K. Flasch, "Einleitung", in: *Dietrich von Freiberg, Opera omnia*, Vol. I, p. XV.

[6] B. Mojsisch, *Die Theorie des Intellekts bei Dietrich von Freiberg*, Hamburg 1977 (Dietrich von Freiberg *Opera omnia*, Beiheft 1), p. 78. Cf. id., "Konstruktive Intellektualität. Dietrich von Freiberg und seine neue Intellekttheorie", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer (eds.), *Geistesleben im 13. Jahrhundert*, pp. 68–78.

[7] Dietrich of Freiberg, *Tractatus de origine rerum praedicamentalium* (ed. L. Sturlese, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. III, Hamburg 1983, pp. 135–201). Cf. L. Sturlese, *Storia della filosofia tedesca nel medioevo. Il secolo XIII*, Firenze 1993, pp. 185–204. K. Flasch, *Dietrich von Freiberg. Philosophie, Theologie, Naturforschung um 1300*, Frankfurt am Main 2007, pp. 109–165.

[8] Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* V, q. 2 [held Christmas 1280 or Eastern 1281] (ed. L. Badius, Paris 1518, Vol. I, fol. 154rD–vE).

beings (*aliqua entia*)". The claim in itself is not spectacular; crucial, however, is the addition that these beings that are constituted by the intellect are nevertheless no beings of reason, but "things of the first intention", that is, real beings.[9] The thesis is still rather vague: What beings are constituted by the productivity of the intellect?

Dietrich clarifies the constitutive function of the intellect through an analysis of the relation of the intellect to its *obiectum*. The object is not simply prefixed for the intellect, but as object caused by it. Dietrich reverses the causal relation that medieval theories ascribe to the object as the moving cause of the intellect: "If some causality is found between the intellect and its objects, this must rather be found in the intellect with respect to things than the other way round".[10] An intellective power is, in contrast to the senses, not moved by an object, but its object does not acquire intelligibility and the proper *ratio* of object unless by the intellect's act of knowing: *res intellecta operatione intellectus acquirit rationem obiecti*.[11]

In what does the typical feature of an object of the intellect consist? Dietrich gives two descriptions of it. One defines the "quiddity" (*quiditas*) of a thing as the proper object. The intellect apprehends this by distinguishing and determining the proper *ratio* (f. i. "rational animal") of a thing (f. i. "man"). It is not nature that distinguishes between thing and *ratio* of a thing, but the intellect by determining the parts of the form that are signified in the definition. Because the intellect is causal principle of the *ratio rei*, at the same time it constitutes the thing that has being according to this *ratio*, that is, its quidditative being (*esse quidditativum*). In sum, that the intellect constitutes its

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[9] Dietrich of Freiberg, *De origine*, c. 5 (ed. Sturlese, p. 181): "In quo ostenditur, quomodo intellectus respectu aliquorum entium habeat modum causalis principii eo, quod quaedam sunt entia primae intentionis, quae constituuntur operatione intellectus secundum Peripateticos".

[10] *Ibid.*, (21) (p. 186): "Si igitur inter intellectum et huiusmodi sua obiecta attenditur aliqua causalitas, necesse est ipsam inveniri potius apud intellectum respectu rerum quam e converso".

[11] *Ibid.*, (58) (pp. 198–199). Cf. *ibid.*, (26) (p. 187): "Est autem et aliud genus apprehensionis, cuius ratio non consistit in moveri ab aliquo obiecto (…). Et haec virtus apprehensiva est intellectus, qui secundum hunc modum habet modum et rationem causae respectu sui obiecti. Obiecta enim non habent rationem causae respectu intellectus in actu, (…) sed potius in cognoscendo incipit habere obiectum propriam rationem obiecti".

object means—to use Dietrich's neologism—that the intellect "quiddifies" (*quidificat*) things.[12]

Dietrich's other description of the object of the intellect is "being as such" (*ens simpliciter*). His explanation is again based on the difference between nature and intellect. Nature causes the actual existence of individual beings; it effects "being as such" solely through the continuous succession of individual things. Consequently, *ens simpliciter* only exists in potency in those things and has in nature only being in potency. However, "being as such", which is the first object (*primum obiectum*) of the intellect, is being in act, because otherwise it would not have the feature of an object. Hence, it has beingness (*entitas*) through the operation of the intellect. This is the meaning of the common saying (which goes back to Averroes) that "the intellect effects universality in things".[13]

3. It cannot be denied that there are some striking similarities between Dietrich's account of the origin of the categorial structure of things and Kant's project, for instance the reversal of the causal relation between intellect and object. But do they justify a transcendental-logical interpretation of Dietrich's treatise in the sense of a "Copernican revolution" in the Middle Ages?[14] It has been objected that the modernity

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[12] *Ibid.*, (26) (pp. 187–188): "Obiectum enim intellectus est quiditas secundum Philosophum vel res secundum rationem suae quiditatis; hanc autem nequaquam apprehendit intellectus nisi distinguendo et determinando eius propria principia, quae Philosophus vocat partes formae, quas significat definitio. (…) Et ex hoc iam habet forma rationem quiditatis et ipsa res esse quiditativum. Et haec est propria ratio obiecti virtutis intellectivae". Cf. *ibid.*, (30) (p. 189); (32) (p. 189): "Cum igitur intellectus noster habeat rationem principii et causae respectu huius rationis, quae est animal rationale (…), ergo habet et respectu ipsius hominis, scilicet secundum quod habet esse secundum hanc rationem, quod est esse quiditativum".

[13] *Ibid.*, (33) (p. 190): "Obiectum autem intellectus non est ens hoc ut hoc, sed ens simpliciter. Cum igitur natura in rebus generabilibus et corruptibilibus non faciat secundum actum existere nisi entia haec et individualia, ens autem simpliciter facit solum per individuorum factionem sive successivam continuationem, unde etiam ens simpliciter secundum se totum invenitur in huiusmodi rebus in potentia et, inquantum potest ab ipsis abstrahi (…) non habet esse in natura nisi in potentia per individuorum successivam continuationem; cum autem ens simpliciter, quod est obiectum primum intellectus, sit ens secundum actum, alioquin non haberet rationem obiecti, igitur huiusmodi ens habet entitatem ex operatione intellectus. Et hoc est, quod communiter dicitur, quod intellectus agit universalitatem in rebus".

[14] In later publications K. Flasch has been more reserved. Already in his study "Bemerkungen zu Dietrich von Freiberg, *De origine rerum praedicamentalium*", in: id. (ed.), *Von Meister Dietrich zu Meister Eckhart*, Hamburg 1984 (Corpus Philosophorum

claim places Dietrich in opposition to the tradition, whereas his understanding of the productivity of the intellect is rather an original continuation of it.[15] Two concrete arguments can be levelled against the transcendental-logical interpretation.

The first is his explanation of the constitutive role of the intellect through the model of the convergence of several causes. This model of "simultaneous causality" means that one and the same thing is produced by several efficient causes in such a way that it is wholly produced by each of them, although according to diverse *rationes*.[16] Let us see how Dietrich uses this model.

A thing is called "being" (*ens*), insofar as the causality of the first cause, which can be designated with the term "creation", descends into it. The same thing is called "being of nature" (*ens naturae*), insofar as the causality of the second cause, that is, the natural *generans*, attains to it. As "being", the generated thing wholly is through the first cause with respect to the principles of being; as "being of nature", it wholly is through the generating cause with respect to the principles according to another mode (*modus*), namely, the *ratio* of potency and act.[17] The novelty of Dietrich's model of simultaneous causality consists in its having not two, but three members. The idea of the convergence of God and nature is traditional, new is the extension of the model to the causality of the intellect. "Similarly", Dietrich argues, "the same thing is according to the quidditative being (*esse quiditativum*) through the operation of the intellect, insofar as this determines the principles of another *ratio*, namely the parts of the form which is the quiddity of a thing, signified by the definition". In this sense a thing wholly is through the act of the intellect.[18]

Teutonicorum Medii Aevi, Beiheft 2), pp. 34–45, he expresses "retractions" with respect to his earlier interpretation (p. 34).

[15] Cf. Th. Kobusch, "Die Modi des Seienden nach Dietrich von Freiberg", in: K. Flasch (ed.), *Von Meister Dietrich zu Meister Eckhart*, pp. 46–67. D. Perler, *Theorien der Intentionalität im Mittelalter*, Frankfurt am Main ²2002, pp. 165–177.

[16] Dietrich of Freiberg, *De origine*, c. 5 (36) (ed. L. Sturlese, p. 191).

[17] *Ibid.*, (37) (p. 192): "Sicut igitur res generata secundum se totam est a primo principio, inquantum est ens, secundum quod ab eodem sibi determinantur essendi principia quantum ad essentiam principiorum, sic eadem res secundum esse naturae invenitur et causatur a generante secundum se totam, inquantum sibi determinantur principia secundum alium modum, videlicet secundum rationem potentiae et actus".

[18] *Ibid.*: "Similiter etiam eadem res secundum esse quiditativum est ab operatione intellectus, secundum quod sibi determinantur principia alterius rationis, scilicet quae sunt partes formae, quae est rei quiditas, quae significatur per definitionem. Et sic

The model of a threefold simultaneous causality is not compatible with a transcendental-logical interpretation of *De origine*. Each of the three causes has a causality proper to it. *Deus*, *natura* and *intellectus* produce really the same (*idem re*), but according to diverse *rationes*. Dietrich's thesis that the intellect causes entity in things, insofar as they are a "what" (*quid*) and have a quidditative being, has a restrictive sense. The intellect, he observes, does not give things that which they are, insofar as they are "beings" or "beings of nature".[19] The same idea can also be expressed in a more positive manner by saying that in Dietrich the causality of the intellect has a "completing" function; the intellect completes what nature effects. That is the way in which medieval philosophy in general has understood the constitutive function of the intellect.[20]

4. There is another reason why it is inappropriate to draw a parallel between Dietrich's *De origine* and Kant's "Copernican revolution". It has been suggested that for the German Dominican "the basic question of philosophy is not the question as to *being*, but that as to *mind*".[21] But in Dietrich's work we do not notice any sense of inaugurating a new way of thought. Nor does he, like Kant (see *Critique of Pure Reason* B XXII), intend to transform the current method of metaphysics in order "to make progress" in the tasks of this discipline. Dietrich's approach to metaphysics is, despite some new accents, essentially traditional. An illustration is his explanation of the distinction between the three theoretical sciences metaphysics, physics and mathematics at the end of *De origine*.

Metaphysics considers being as being, but leaves aside the extrinsic causes of a thing, both the efficient and final ones, which belong rather to the scope of natural philosophy, and restricts its consideration of being to the formal cause. This view evokes the objection that

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secundum se totam est ab actu intellectus, sicut et a praedictis causis, sed alia et alia ratione (…)".

[19] *Ibid.*, (47) (p. 194): "Circa quaedam enim entia sic negotiatur intellectus, ut non det eis esse id, quod sunt, inquantum sunt entia et entia naturae (…), sed agit in eis entitatem, secundum quod sunt quid et habent esse quiditativum".

[20] Cf. Th. Kobusch, "Begriff und Sache. Die Funktion des menschlichen Intellekts in der mittelalterlichen Philosophie", in: *Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 2 (2004), pp. 140–157.

[21] R. Imbach, "Gravis iactura verae doctrinae. Prolegomena zu einer Interpretation der Schrift *De ente et essentia* Dietrichs von Freiberg O.P.", in: *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 26 (1979), pp. 369–425, here p. 376.

in that case there would be no difference between metaphysics and mathematics, for both sciences consider through the formal cause what belongs *per se* to the proper subject.[22] Dietrich replies that there remains a difference in two respects: first,with respect to the *subiectum* of these sciences, for metaphysics considers being as being and that which belongs to it *per se*, mathematics, however, considers being of a determinate genus; second, with respect to the *modum subiecti*, for metaphysics considers what belongs to the subject according to the *ratio* of the quiddity or form found in nature, mathematics, however, according to the *ratio* of the form that abstracts from every nature.[23] Dietrich's reflections on the "subject" of First Philosophy reveal an ontological conception of metaphysics.[24] The innovative character of his thought concerns more the correlation between intellect and *obiectum* than the correlation between metaphysics and *subiectum*.

The prologue of *De origine* is also traditional. Dietrich starts this work with an observation which he repeats at the beginning of his treatise *De ente et essentia*. If one wants to know the *propria* of things, one should not ignore the *communia*. He then explains what the *maxime communia* are: "most common" are being and that which belongs *per se* to being, either as parts or as properties.[25] Dietrich's remark about the necessity of the study of the *communia* is the same consideration that Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, in the prologues to their commentaries on the *Metaphysics*, advance for the necessity of First Philosophy. Dietrich's reference to the *maxime communia* must therefore be understood as a reference to the scope of metaphysics. This science considers that which is most common, being as being. The "parts" that belong to being *per se* are the categories; the treatise *De origine* is actually a metaphysical work. The "properties" that essentially belong to being are the *transcendentia*. Dietrich connects metaphysics with the

[22] Dietrich of Freiberg, *De origine*, c. 5 (64) (ed. L. Sturlese, p. 200).

[23] *Ibid.*, (65–67) (p. 201).

[24] This position is incompatible with the view that "the divine being" is the subject of First Philosophy, which is expressed in the *Fragmentum de subiecto theologiae* 3 (9) (ed. L. Sturlese, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. III, p. 281).

[25] Dietrich of Freiberg, *De origine*, prooem. (1) (ed. L. Sturlese, p. 137): "(…) ignoratis communibus necesse est et circa propriorum notitiam deficere. Maxime autem omnium communia sunt ens et ea, quae sunt entis per se. Dico autem ea, quae sunt entis per se sive secundum rationem partium entis sive secundum rationem per se passionum et propriorum accidentium entis inquantum ens". Cf. *Tractatus de ente et essentia*, prooem. (1) (ed. R. Imbach, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. II, Hamburg 1980, p. 25).

study of the transcendentals in the medieval sense, not the Kantian; he deals with them in some of his other writings.[26]

8.1.2 *Dietrich's doctrine of the transcendentals*

Dietrich describes the most common notions in traditional terms: "Sinse 'being', 'what' (*quid*), 'true' and 'one' are *transcendentia*, they run through (*circueunt*) all beings and are convertible (*convertuntur*) with each other according to their supposits, but differ according to their concepts (*rationes*)". Among these terms there exists an order to the effect that "being" is first, next "what" follows, and then the other concepts.[27] Unusual in this enumeration is the notion *quid*, which is the second transcendental after *ens*.

The primacy of "being" (ens)

1. In his treatise *De ente et essentia*, which Dietrich probably composed during his professorship in Paris (1297), he deals with the basic notions of ontology. He starts with "being" (*ens*), since this is what the intellect first conceives.[28] In several other places in his work Dietrich underlines the fundamental place of "being": this concept is *prima*, *communissima, simplicissima* and *formalissima*. *Ens* is "first": like Albert the Great, Dietrich supports this claim with a reference to the fourth proposition of *De causis*, "The first of created things is being". It is "most common", since being comprises, both really (*in re*) and in signification, everything in it. "Being" is "most simple", since all concepts are reduced to it. It is "the most formal" of all concepts, since

[26] His doctrine of the transcendentals has received relatively little attention. Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Die Transzendentalienlehre bei Dietrich von Freiberg", in: K.-H. Kandler / B. Mojsisch / F.B. Stammkotter (eds.), *Dietrich von Freiberg. Neue Perspektiven seiner Philosophie, Theologie und Naturwissenschaft*, Amsterdam – Philadelphia 1999 (Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie, 28), pp. 23–47.

[27] Dietrich of Freiberg, *Tractatus de quiditatibus entium*, c. 7 (3) (ed. R. Imbach / J.-D. Cavigioli, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. III, p. 109): "Et quoniam ens et quid et verum et unum et similia sunt transcendentia, et circueunt omnia entia et secundum suppositа convertuntur. Quamvis propriis rationibus differant, est tamen in eis aliquis ordo. Ens enim secundum suam propriam rationem omnium est primum, deinde quid est, deinde alia".

[28] For this treatise, cf. R. Imbach, "Gravis iactura verae doctrinae" (for the dating, p. 398). A. de Libera / C. Michon (transl. and comm.), *Thomas d'Aquin, Dietrich de Freiberg, L'Etre et l'essence. Le vocabulaire médiéval de l'ontologie*, Paris 1996.

by "being" something is set apart from "nothing".[29] The distance to "nothing" is an element that always recurs in Dietrich's understanding of "being".

The primacy of "being" can be further specified. *Ens* is the first concept, because something is set apart from nothing by the *essentia* as *essentia*. By "essence" Dietrich does not mean the quiddity of a thing nor does he refer to Aristotle's *ousia*, but he explains the term by a quotation from Augustine who points out the entitative character of "essence"; the term is taken from the verb *esse* and means that something "is" (*est*). A thing is therefore called *ens*, insofar as it has an "essence".[30] In the next chapters of *De ente*, Dietrich accounts for the semantics of the terms *ens, essentia* and *esse*. They all signify the same, namely the whole essence of a thing, and differ only in their modes of signifying. The same that is signified by *ens* and *essentia* "in the manner of a *habitus*", namely the essence of a thing, is signified by the term *esse* "in the manner of an act".[31]

From Dietrich's clarification of the *ratio entis* it is evident that his understanding of "being" is different from Aquinas's. According to Thomas the term *ens* is taken from "the act of being" (*actus essendi*), which is really distinct from the essence in every creature. The second

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[29] Dietrich of Freiberg, *De ente et essentia*, I, c. 2 (2) (ed. R. Imbach, pp. 28–9). *De origine*, c. 1 (7) (ed. Sturlese, p. 139); c. 1 (25) (p. 144); c. 3 (8) (p.159): "(…) ratio entis (…) est prima et formalissima omnium intentionum (…) qua res primo formaliter differt a nihilo". *De quiditatibus entium*, 1 (3) (ed. R. Imbach / J.-D. Cavigioli, p. 99). *Tractatus de natura contrariorum*, c. 15 (1) (ed. R. Imbach, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. II, pp. 94–95). *Tractatus de visione beatifica*, 3.2.9.1 (3) (ed. B. Mojsisch, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. I, p. 86): "Consistit autem communissima et simplicissima et prima ratio entis in eo, quod ipsa est prima et simplicissima omnium intentionum repertarum in rebus, qua res primo sunt aliquid et primo differunt a nihilo et quantum ad deductionem eius ad esse in rebus creatis—'prima' enim 'rerum creatarum est esse'—et quantum ad essentiam rerum in se—omnes enim rerum intentiones in ipsam tamquam in primam et simplicissimam et communissimam resolvuntur".

[30] Dietrich of Freiberg, *De ente et essentia*, I, c. 1 (2) (ed. R. Imbach, p. 27). The same point is made in *De quiditatibus entium*, c. 1 (3) (ed. R. Imbach / J.-D. Cavigioli, p. 99): "Ens enim in eo, quod ens, prima et simplicissima omnium formalium intentionum est, qua res primo per essentiam, secundum quod essentia, distat a nihilo. Dico autem 'essentia in eo, quod essentia', quia, sicut dicit Augustinus libro *De immortalitate animae* [XII, 19], essentia non dicitur, nisi quia est".

[31] Dietrich of Freiberg, *De ente et essentia*, I, c. 5 (1) (ed. R. Imbach, p. 31): "Nunc de essentia et esse considerandum, et circa ea notandum, quod idem important in sua significatione et idem significant, quod ens et entitas, videlicet totam rei essentiam (…) quamvis differant in modis significandi, ut videlicet esse significet per modum actus, idem autem significant ens et entitas per modum habitus et quietis. Et sic etiam differunt essentia et esse".

part of Dietrich's treatise is a polemic against Thomas and criticizes the argumentation that Aquinas, in his *De ente et essentia*, had adduced for a real distinction between *esse* and essence.[32]

2. Instructive for Dietrich's understanding of "transcendental" are his reflections on the differentiation of being. The first and most common intention of "being" and the modes proper to being as being, such as potency and act, one and many, descend into "the parts of being". By those "parts", to which Dietrich applies this general principle, he does not only mean the categories, but a more comprehensive division. "Being" is first divided into *ens reale* found in nature, which is differentiated according to the ten categories, and being in the soul or *ens conceptionale*. The last term is a neologism signifying "everything that is in an intellectual manner (*intellectualiter*)", which includes not only the conceived thing insofar as it is conceived but also the act of knowledge or intellection itself.[33] As a consequence of the general principle that "being" descends into its parts, Dietrich concludes that conceptional being is also invested (*induit*) with the first intention of "being", by which it is set apart from nothing, because there cannot be any being without this intention.[34]

Dietrich's understanding of "transcendental" is no longer determined by the opposition to "categorical", for the categories do not divide being in general but only one "part" or domain of being, that of nature. The transcendental as transcendental "runs through" both domains of being, "real" as well as "conceptional" being. Dietrich maintains a structural analogy between *ens conceptionale* and *ens secundum naturam* in two respects: with respect to "the generalness of being"—conceptional being includes the totality of beings (*universitas entium*) "according to another being" (*secundum aliud esse*) than natural being, namely insofar as every being is knowable—; and with respect to "the

[32] *Ibid.*, II, c. 1 (1) (p. 38).

[33] Dietrich von Freiberg, *De visione beatifica*, 3.2.9.1 (6) (ed. B. Mojsisch, p. 86): "Dividitur autem ens uno modo in ens reale repertum apud naturam, scilicet in substantiam et alia novem genera praedicamentorum, et in ens in anima seu conceptionale (…)"; *ibid.*, 4.3.4 (5) (p. 123): "(…) ens conceptionale inquantum huiusmodi est omne id, quod intellectualiter est (…)". Vgl. Th. Kobusch, "Die Modi des Seienden nach Dietrich von Freiberg", in: K. Flasch (Hrsg.), *Von Meister Dietrich zu Meisser Eckhart*, pp. 46–67. B. Mojsisch, "Sein als Bewusst-sein. Die Bedeutung des ens conceptionale bei Dietrich von Freiberg", in: *ibid.*, pp. 95–105.

[34] Dietrich von Freiberg, *Tractatus de intellectu et intelligibili*, III, c. 8 (2) and (5) (ed. B. Mojsisch, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. I, p. 183).

general modes of being", which descend from being in general (*generalitas entis*) into both the real and the conceptional beings.[35]

The second transcendental: Quid

In Dietrich's enumeration of the *transcendentia, quid* comes second. The position he gives to it is remarkable, since this notion was not listed in thirteenth-century expositions. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, in his account in *De veritate*, mentions in addition to the traditional transcendentals the Avicennian determinations *res* and *aliquid*: the name "thing" expresses the essence or quiddity of a being, "something" the division from others (see ch. 6.1). Dietrich's *quid* is not identical with either of them: neither with *res*, because, unlike Aquinas, he distinguishes between "essence", which is signified by *ens*, and "quiddity", nor with *aliquid*—although Dietrich designates *quid* as *aliquid* more than once—, because he does not count "what" among the relational transcendentals as Aquinas does, but relates it to being in itself.

Dietrich deals with *quid* in his treatise *De quiditatibus entium*. The notion is convertible with "being" with respect to the extension of their supposits—there is no being that is not something, and there is no *aliquid* that is not being. *Ens* and *quid* differ, however, according to their concepts (*rationes*). Dietrich connects the conceptual difference between the first and second transcendental with the distinction Aristotle, in his *Posterior Analytics*, made between the questions of "whether a thing is" (*si est*) and "what it is" (*quid est*).[36]

Ens answers the first question; Dietrich repeats what he has said on "being" in *De ente*: it is the first concept, signifying that something *is*, that is, is set apart from nothing through its essence. *Quid* is the reply to the "what" question and adds a formal determination (*informatio*)

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[35] Dietrich von Freiberg, *De visione beatifica*, 3.2.9.1 (1–2) (ed. B. Mojsisch, pp. 86–87).

[36] Dietrich von Freiberg, *De quiditatibus entium*, c. 1 (2) (ed. R. Imbach / J.-D. Cavigioli, p. 99): "(…) ens et quid, quamvis secundum utriusque eorum latitudinem et continentiam secundum supposita convertantur ad invicem—nihil enim est ens, quod non sit aliquid, et nihil est aliquid, quod non sit ens—, differunt tamen secundum suas proprias rationes, secundum quod etiam Philosophus distinguit in demonstrativis in libro *Posteriorum* quaestionem 'si est' a quaestione 'quid est'". Similarly in *ibid.*, c. 7 (3) (p. 109). Cf. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, II, c. 1, 89b 24–25. On this treatise, cf. A. Maurer, "The *De quidditatibus entium* of Dietrich of Freiberg and its Criticism of Thomistic Metaphysics", in: *Mediaeval Studies* 18 (1956), pp. 173–203.

to the concept (*ratio*) of "being". It designates a specification by which a being is formally determined to its proper nature or essence. According to this *informatio* a thing is not only "being", distinct from nothing, but also a quidditatively determined thing, a "this or that being" (*hoc vel hoc*), as "man" and "horse".[37]

That by which a being is a "what" is its quiddity. In *De quiditatibus entium*, Dietrich examines what this principle is in the diverse orders of being (beings of reason, natural beings, substances and accidents). In a general sense, the *quiditas* is an intrinsic formal principle of a thing, pertaining to its actuality; from this principle the *ratio rei* is taken, both according to the *ratio* of being (*essendi*) and that of knowability (*notificandi*).[38] Dietrich's remark on the *ratio rei*, which is the definition of a thing, can form the link to his account of the constitutive role of the intellect in *De origine*. He does not make the connection, but it must consist in that the intellect causes its object, the quiddity of a thing, insofar as it determines the proper *ratio* of that thing and, consequently, its quidditative being.

The ratio *of "one"* (unum)

Dietrich's determination of the transcendental "one" is to be found in his treatise *De natura contrariorum*, in which he discusses the different kinds of opposition. The first and most absolute opposition, which is the origin of the other kinds, is that of *affirmatio* and *negatio*. The terms must not be taken as logical constructs (*secundum logicam considerationem*). "Affirmation" and "negation" should be understood as "real" intentions concerning "being" (*circa ens*), of which one means the *positio* of a thing and the other the removal of it. If this were not the case, Dietrich argues, the opposition between affirmation and negation would not be the origin and reason of "*real* modes of being" *(reales modi entis)*, such as "the one" and "the many".[39]

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[37] *De quiditatibus entium*, c. 1 (4) (ed. R. Imbach / J.-D. Cavigioli, p. 99): "Ipsum autem quid in eo, quod quid, seu quiditas in eo, quod quiditas, super rationem entis importat quandam rei informationem, saltem quoad modum intelligendi, qua res seu ens determinatur ad talem vel talem essentiam vel naturam, ut res talis non solum sit ens per distantiam eius a nihilo, sed etiam sit hoc vel hoc secundum aliquam informationem (…)".

[38] *Ibid.*, c. 2 (2) (p. 100).

[39] *De natura contrariorum*, c. 13 (1) (ed. R. Imbach, p. 93).

The correlation becomes apparent in Dietrich's analysis of that which constitutes the *ratio* of "one". His analysis consists of five steps that correspond with the order of the primary notions of the intellect and bear some similarities with Aquinas's account of these notions (6.4.1). (i) The starting point is, of course, "being" (*ens*), which is the first intention. (ii) Second, the negation of "being"or *non ens* comes into the intellect. (iii) From these two notions the *ratio* of *oppositio* follows. "Being" and "non-being" constitute the meaning of "opposition" as such, because the affirmed term, "being", is the first concept and the negated term is the first removal.[40] (iv) The first opposition founds the meaning of *distinctio* of distinguishable things. (v) From this, the *ratio* of *unum* is taken, since the distinction that is effected by "being" and "non-being" is removed from something by "one". Thus, "one" is traditionally said to mean "undivided being" (*ens indivisum*) or "that in which no division occurs". But it would probably be better to say, Dietrich observes, that the one is "that in which no *distinction* is". "Division" properly pertains to the category of quantity and is metaphorically used when it signifies the general concept of "one" that is convertible with "being".[41]

Like most thirteenth-century authors, Dietrich holds that the *ratio* of "one" expresses something negative, the negation or privation of distinction. He even maintains that a twofold privation is implied in the meaning of "one": it denies the opposition or distinction between being and non-being, an opposition that already contains a negation in it. But Dietrich raises an objection to the negative understanding of *unum.* A twofold privation does not seem to be a real privation: a *privatio privationis* expresses rather something positive than negative—a conception of the "one" that is typical of Meister Eckhart's thought. In his reply, Dietrich argues that the *ratio* of "one" implies a double privation, but not a "privation of a privation". The first privation concerns a *part* of the opposition between *ens* and *non ens*, namely non-

[40] *Ibid.*, c. 15 (1) and c. 16 (1) (pp. 94–95).

[41] *Ibid.*, c. 16 (2) (p. 95): "Hinc est etiam, quod in huiusmodi oppositione fundatur primo ratio distinctionis quorumque distinguibilium. Ex his autem iam trahitur ratio unius, inquantum ab aliquo removetur distinctio, quae fit per ens et non ens, et hoc est, quod dicunt, quod unum est ens indivisum sive in quo non cadit divisio. Fortassis autem magis proprie diceretur 'in quo non cadit distinctio vel remotio', si attendatur propria ratio rei. Divisio enim proprie pertinet quantitati, sed quia quantum ad illud, a quo nomen imponitur, transtulerunt a genere quantitatis ipsum nomen unius ad significandum hanc generalem intentionem cum ente convertibilem, volebant etiam translative uti nomine divisionis".

being; the second privation concerns the *whole* opposition between being and non-being. An opposition as such is no privation, but has somehow a mode of being. Hence the privation of the opposition in the notion of "one" means something negative.[42]

"The good" (bonum)

Dietrich does not say anything essential about the transcendental property "true"; its role seems to be assumed by the transcendental determination *quid* and by the notion of *ens conceptionale*. "Good" is a different case, since Dietrich explicitly argues for its transcendentality. His point of departure is Aristotle's doctrine that every being possesses a proper operation, for the sake of which it is; the end of a thing consists in its operation by which the thing tends to something outside (*extra*) it. This is why, Dietrich concludes, "not only entity and truth are to be found in every thing, but also goodness, so that every thing is 'being', 'true' and 'good' ". These terms are convertible with one another in the sense that a thing is "being" in itself, is "true" in relation to the intellect, and is "good", insofar as it "actively abounds in something else outside it" (*redundans in aliud extra se active*).[43]

This determination of the transcendentality of the "good", however, introduces a tension in Dietrich's metaphysics. This science considers being as being and the (transcendental) properties that belong to being as such. As we have seen, in Dietrich's view metaphysics leaves aside the extrinsic causes, both the efficient and final ones, in its study of being. But the notion of "good" is closely connected with the idea of natural finality. Consequently, *bonum* must lose its metaphysical relevance, a tendency that will be manifest in Meister Eckhart's thought.[44]

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[42] *Ibid.*, c. 16 (3–5) (p. 96). In particular (5): "Ad quod patet responsio, quia prima privatio in ratione unius materialiter se habet, quia ipsa est pars sive extremum oppositionis, quae est entis et non entis. Oppositio autem in eo, quod oppositio, aliqualiter habet modum entis. Hinc est, quod privatio dictae oppositionis modum privationis habet potius quam positionis".

[43] Dietrich of Freiberg, *De intellectu et intelligibili*, I, c. 10 (2) (ed. B. Mojsisch, p. 143): "Esset autem unaquaeque res superflua in natura et frustra, si destitueretur propria operatione sua, quae est finis rei, propter quem est, qua, inquam, operatione tendit in extra, quia hoc est, quo non solum invenitur entitas et veritas in unaquaque re, sed etiam bonitas, ut unaquaeque res sit ens, verum et bonum, et hoc convertibiliter, ut sit ens aliquod in se, sit verum in ordine ad intellectum, bonum autem inquantum redundans in aliud extra se active".

[44] Cf. W. Goris, "Dietrich von Freiberg und Meister Eckhart über das Gute", in: K.-H. Kandler / B. Mojsisch / F. B. Stammkotter (eds.), *Dietrich von Freiberg. Neue Perspektiven seiner Philosophie, Theologie und Naturwissenschaft*, pp. 169–188.

8.2 Meister Eckhart: *Deus communis est*

The name of Meister Eckhart (ca. 1260–1328) is generally not associated with the doctrine of the transcendentals. That is not correct, for the German Dominican deserves a special place in the history of transcendental thought in the Middle Ages. He designed a unique project, the *Opus tripartitum*, for which the doctrine is fundamental. Not only is the central place the Meister attributes to the doctrine notable, but also his conception of transcendentality. It differs from that of Dietrich of Freiberg as well as from Thomas's model; Eckhart identifies the transcendentals with God: *Deus communis est*.[45]

8.2.1 *The project of the* Opus tripartitum: *"Metaphysics of the transcendentals"*

Eckhart's project of the *Opus tripartitum* has qua formal structure and qua doctrinal content no equivalent in medieval thought. With respect to both aspects the uniqueness of the work will be defined.

1. In the "General Prologue", Eckhart explains the division of the work and the "order and manner of proceeding" in it. As the title indicates, the work is divided into three parts: the *Opus propositionum*, which would contain more than thousand propositions; the *Opus quaestionum*, organized according to the model of the *Summa* (*theologiae*) of "the illustrious friar" Thomas Aquinas; and the *Opus expositionum* that is divided into two parts, expositions of texts (*auctoritates*) in the books of the Old and New Testaments, and the Book of Sermons, in which certain texts are expounded more fully.[46]

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[45] For general studies on Eckhart's doctrine, cf. R. Schneider, *Eckhart's Doctrine of the Transcendental Perfections in God and Creatures*, Toronto 1965 [Doctoral Thesis]. K. Albert, *Meister Eckharts These vom Sein. Untersuchungen zur Metaphysik des Opus tripartitum*, Kastellaun 1976, pp. 109–190. A. Wilke, *Ein Sein—Ein Erkennen. Meister Eckharts Christologie und Samkaras Lehre von Atman: Zur (Un-)Vergleichbarkeit zweier Einheitslehren*, Bern 1995 (Studia religiosa Helvetica. Series altera, 2), pp. 108–152. W. Goris, *Einheit als Prinzip und Ziel. Versuch über die Einheitsmetaphysik des Opus tripartitum Meister Eckharts*, Leiden – New York – Köln 1997 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 59).

[46] Meister Eckhart, *Prologus generalis in opus tripartitum*, nn. 2–6 (in: *Die lateinischen Werke* [= LW], edited on behalf of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Stuttgart 1936–, Vol. I, pp. 148–151). Helpful is the commentary on the Prologue by F. Brunner in the French edition of Eckhart, in: *L'œuvre latine de Maître Eckhart,* Vol. 1:

The division of the entire *Opus* is thus based on the distinction of three literary genres corresponding to three forms of thought—propositions, questions and expositions. *Quaestiones* and *expositiones* are the usual literary genres of Scholasticism; they belong to what Eckhart, at the beginning of the prologue, calls "the school practise" (*actibus scholasticis*). The *propositiones*, on the other hand, belong to the genre of the "theorems", which was rarely used in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and represents another tradition of knowing. The formal example of the Work of Propositions is the anonymous *Liber De causis*, which consists of 31 propositions with comments. Eckhart's thought has much affinity with this book, upon which Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas wrote commentaries. Another model is a metaphysical treatise from the Boethian age, the work *De hebdomadibus*, in which Boethius advances a number of axioms in order to solve the problem as to the relation between being and goodness in things.

What is innovative in the project of the *Opus tripartitum* is the systematic connection of the three parts based on a new logic of knowledge. Eckhart links the propositional model with the Scholastic tradition in such a manner that the *propositio* is determinative for the *quaestio* and *expositio*. In this respect a preliminary remark in the General Prologue on the order of the *Opus tripartitum* is revealing:

> It should be noted beforehand that the second Work, and so too the third, are so dependent on the first, namely the Work of Propositions, that without it they are of little use, because the explanations of the questions and the expositions of scriptural texts are usually based (*fundantur*) on one of the propositions.[47]

Eckhart's project acquires its systematic foundation in the Work of Propositions; without it, he observes, the other two works are "only of little use". In the Prologue, he illustrates his manner of proceeding in the entire *Opus* through an example. He deals with the first proposition "Being is God" (*Esse est Deus*), the first question "Does God exist?", and the first text of Scripture, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" (Gen. 1,1). He successively shows the explanation of the proposition, the solution of the question on the basis of this proposition, and the exposition of the scriptural text by the same thesis.

Le Commentaire de la Genèse, précédé des Prologues, intr., text, transl. and comm. by F. Brunner / A. de Libera / E. Weber / E. Zum Brunn, Paris 1984, pp. 97–196.

[47] *Prologus generalis*, n. 11 (LW I, p. 156).

In the conclusion of the General Prologue, the Meister stresses again the fundamental importance of the first proposition in his new architectonics of knowledge and the "rational" character of his procedure: "Finally, notice that through the first proposition all, or almost all, questions concerning God are easily solved, (…) and most texts about Him, even obscure and difficult ones, are clearly explained by natural reason (*ratio naturalis*)". [48]

2. According to a commonly accepted view, the project of the *Opus tripartitum* would originate from the period that Eckhart held the Dominican chair of theology for "foreigners" at the University of Paris for the second time (1311–13)—an honour earlier bestowed upon Thomas Aquinas. The *Opus* was seen as a "turn" in his thought, insofar as the basic proposition *Esse est Deus* appears to revise the central idea of the first Parisian Question, which dates from Eckhart's first professorship in Paris (1302–3), namely *Deus est intelligere*; the claim that God is "understanding" has a critical sense, since it explicitly denies that He is "being". But the chronology on which the hypothesis of a doctrinal development was based has been challenged by the spectacular manuscript discoveries and studies of Loris Sturlese. The Italian scholar established that the first stage of the *Opus tripartitum* has to be dated earlier than has been assumed so far and that the prologues had already been written in the middle of the first decade of the fourteenth century. This means that the distinction between an "early" and a "late" Eckhart is no longer tenable.[49] One must rather depart from the unity in his thought, for which the General Prologue to the *Opus* has a programmatic meaning.

The pressing problem for the study and interpretation of Eckhart's work is the fact that his project remained a torso. He never realized the announced program; we only have fragments of the *Opus*. What has been handed down to us are the prologues to the Work of Propositions and the Work of Questions—but not the Works themselves—, and considerable parts of the third Work, namely, commentaries on

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[48] *Ibid.*, n. 22 (p. 165).

[49] L. Sturlese, "Meister Eckhart in der Bibliotheca Amploniana: Neues zur Datierung des 'Opus tripartitum'", in: A. Speer (ed.), *Die Bibliotheca Amploniana: Ihre Bedeutung im Spannungsfeld von Aristotelismus, Nominalismus und Humanismus*, Berlin – New York 1995 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 23), pp. 434–446, in particular p. 445 [reprinted in: id., *Homo divinus*, pp. 95–106].

Genesis (twice), Exodus, Ecclesiasticus, ch. 24, the book Wisdom and the Gospel of John as well as a collection of drafts for sermons. In particular the absence of the *Opus propositionum*, the foundation of the entire project, weighs heavily; the Meister probably never completed it. Yet there is no reason for resignation. The General Prologue and especially the Prologue to the *Opus propositionum* provide insight into the doctrinal objectives of Eckhart's grand project.[50]

3. The *Opus propositionum* is divided into 14 treatises according to the number of the terms (*termini*) of which the propositions are formed. Eckhart mentions the titles of these treatises, which reveal as it were the "basic concepts" of his thought and provide the key to the interpretation of his metaphysics:

Tractatus I: De esse et ente, et eius opposito quod est nihil.
II: De unitate et uno, et eius opposito quod est multum.
III: De veritate et vero, et eius opposito quod est falsum.
IV: De bonitate et bono, et malo eius opposito.
V: De amore et caritate, et peccato eius opposito.
VI: De honesto, virtute et recto, et eorum oppositis, puta turpi, vitio, obliquo.
VII: De toto, et parte eius opposito.
VIII: De communi et indistincto, et horum oppositis, proprio et distincto.
IX: De natura superioris, et inferioris eius oppositi.
X: De primo et novissimo.
XI: De idea et ratione, et horum oppositis, puta de informi et privatione.
XII: De 'quo est', et 'quod est', ei condiviso.
XIII: De ipso deo, summo esse, quod contrarium non habet nisi non esse, ut ait Augustinus.
XIV: De substantia, et accidente.[51]

What are the principles according to which Eckhart orders the *Opus propositionum*? The treatises I–IV deal with "being" (*esse*), "unity", "truth" and "goodness" and with the corresponding concrete terms *ens*, "one", "true" and "good". The clearest evidence for the intrinsic connection of these treatises is the fact that most of Eckhart's

[50] Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Der 'Systematiker' Eckhart", in: A. Speer / L. Wegener (eds.), *Meister Eckhart in Erfurt* (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 32), Berlin – New York 2005, pp. 189–230.
[51] *Prologus generalis*, n. 4 (LW I, pp. 150–151).

preliminary remarks and *notanda* in the Prologue to this Work (the so-called "second" Prologue) are concerned with these four notions together, which are "the firsts" (*prima*) in things and "common to all" (*omnibus communia*) and are called *transcendentia*.[52] His division of the Work of Propositions follows the doctrine of the transcendentals.

The treatises V and VI are connected with the first four treatises through the mediation of the "good" (treat. IV). The object of "love" (treat. V) is "the good"; *caritas* is "the love of the good as good (*amor boni, in quantum bonum*), and this is God".[53] Treatise VI deals with "the moral good" (*honestum*), which is good in the proper sense and "the perfect good",[54] and with "the virtue". A sign of the unity of the first six treatises is the bearing of Eckhart's first preliminary remark in the second Prologue: "Being (*ens*) signifies only *esse*". He adds: "The same is also true in other cases", and refers to the terms of the next treatises, "*unum* signifies nothing but *unitas, verum veritas, bonum bonitas, honestum honestas, rectum rectitudo, iustum iustitia*".[55]

The transcendentals are the core of the Work of Propositions; the entire second Prologue is concerned with these terms. From this we can establish an important specification of the foundational function of the Work of Propositions: Eckhart's project finds its philosophical foundation in a "metaphysics of the transcendentals"—a phrase suggested by Josef Koch.[56] In no other medieval writing do these notions have such a prominent place. Most accounts of the transcendentals are bound to a specific context: the priority of the "good" to "being" is the context of the account of Albertus Magnus (in his commentary on *De divinis nominibus*), the place of truth in the doctrine is the context of the accounts of Thomas Aquinas and of Henry of Ghent. Eckhart,

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[52] *Prologus in opus propositionum*, n. 11 (LW I, p. 171). *Sermo* XXXVII, n. 377 (LW IV, p. 322): "Ens, unum, bonum, verum transcendentia sunt". In two other places Eckhart uses the term *transcendens/transcendentia*: *Expositio libri Genesis*, n. 128 (LW I, p. 283): "(…) omnia huiusmodi transcendentia"; *Sermones et Lectiones super Ecclesiastici cap. 24*, n. 63 (LW II, p. 293): "(…) unum transcendens".

[53] *Expositio libri Sapientiae*, n. 98 (LW II, p. 432).

[54] *Ibid.*, nn. 110–111 (p. 447).

[55] *Prologus in opus propositionum*, n. 2 (LW I, p. 166).

[56] J. Koch, "Sinn und Struktur der Schriftauslegungen Meister Eckharts", in: U. M. Nix / R. Öchslin (Hgg.), *Meister Eckhart, der Prediger. Festschrift zum Eckhart-Gedenkjahr. Hrsg. im Auftrag der Dominikaner-Provinz "Teutonia"*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1960, 73–103 [reprinted in: id., *Kleine Schriften*, Vol. I, Rome 1973 (Storia e Letteratura. Raccolta di Studi e Testi, 127), pp. 399–428, here p. 413].

however, makes the transcendentals the foundation of his theological-philosophical project.

The next six treatises (VII–XII) also belong together. Their connection is not immediately evident, because the notions dealt with are quite different. What is, however, noteworthy is the second preliminary remark in the General Prologue, which apparently expresses a main condition for the understanding of the entire *Opus*. Whereas the first remark concerns the *termini generales*, the second remark concerns the opposition between the "superior" and "inferior", the subject-matter of treatise IX. It argues that the prior and superior is not affected by the inferior and posterior, but influences the inferior with its properties and assimilates it to itself.[57] In fact, the treatises VII–XII all deal with metaphysical structures of order: the opposition of "whole" and "part" (tr. VII), of "common" and "proper" (VIII), "the first" and "the last" (X), "idea" and "the unformed" (XI), *quo est* and *quod est* (XII). These principles determine the distinctive nature of Eckhart's "metaphysics of the transcendentals" in the first six treatises. The subject of treatise VIII, for instance—the "common" (*commune*) and the "indistinct", and their opposites the "proper" and the "distinct"—, touches, as we shall see, Eckhart's understanding of transcendentality.

The treatises XIII and XIV conclude the Work of Propositions. Although the entire *Opus* is aimed at the understanding of the divine reality from the very outset, as the first proposition *Esse est Deus* illustrates, it is only in the title of treatise XIII that God is named: "About God, the highest being". Treatise XIV on "substance and accident" is devoted solely to the creature. Both works, we surmise, summarize the investigations in the preceding treatises, because the relation between God and creature is the main theme of Eckhart's "metaphysics of the transcendentals".

4. How strongly this metaphysics influences the third part of the *Opus tripartitum*, the Work of Expositions, is apparent from Eckhart's Commentary on *Sapientia*. His exegesis is not a *lectio continua*, but restricted to few texts. The book "Wisdom" contains about 440 verses, of which ca. 80 verses (or parts of them) are commented upon. Eckhart deals with many texts briefly, but discusses others (ca. 10 verses)

[57] *Prologus generalis*, n. 10 (LW I, pp. 154–155).

at lengh.[58] The metaphysics of the transcendentals seems to be a crucial selection criterion, for the exposition of most of these texts is determined by the transcendental notions:

- "*In simplicitate cordis quaerite illum*" (Sap. 1,1b): The exposition (nn. 4–8) starts from "one". "Sicut unum et ens convertibiliter se habent, sic simplicitas et intellectualitas" (n. 5).
- "*Deus non fecit mortem nec laetatur in perditione verorum*" (1,13): The exposition (nn. 14–18) deals with "good" and its opposite. "Bonum enim et ens convertuntur" (n. 16).
- "*Creavit enim, ut essent omnia*" (1,14): In the context of the doctrine of creation the opposition *esse-nihil* (nn. 19–35) and the notion *unum* are discussed (nn. 35–40).
- "*Venerunt nihi omnia bona pariter cumilla*" (7,11): The exposition (nn. 96–109) is determined by the notions *bonum* ("bonum enim et ens convertuntur, pari passu currunt", n. 96) and *unum* ("esse semper est unum et in uno", n. 107).
- "*Innumerabilis honestas per manus illius*" (7,11b): the notion *bonum* (nn. 110–111). "Sicut enim unum convertitur cum bono et est bonum, sic multum et omnia cadunt in numerum et per consequens in malum, convertuntur cum malo" (n. 110).
- "*Attingit ubique propter munditiam suam*" (7,24): the notion *esse* (nn. 140–142).
- "*Et cum sit una, omnia potest*" (7,27): The properties of "one" (nn. 144–157).
- "*Attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponit omnia suaviter*" (8,1): the notions *esse* and *bonum*.
- "*Diligis enim omnia quae sunt et nihil odisti eorum quae fecisti*" (11,25): the opposition *esse-nihil* ("Esse autem sive ens et bonum et optimum convertuntur", n. 220).
- "*Similiter autem odio sunt deo impius et impietas eius*" (14,9): the notion *esse* (nn. 250–260).
- "*In omni tempore, etiam in omni loco assistens eis*" (19,20): the notions *esse* and *unum* (nn. 291–300). "Quomodo enim esse, quod cum uno, vero et bono convertitur, toto et perfecto, esset in numero, qui cadit ab uno, in malo quod cadit a bono, in parte quae cadit a

[58] Cf. K. Albert (intr. and transl.), *Meister Eckhart. Kommentar zum Buch der Weisheit*, Sankt Augustin 1988 (Texte zur Philosophie, 7), p. 147.

toto?" (n. 293); "unum et ens convertuntur" (n. 296); "verum enim et ens convertuntur" (n. 297); "verum autem et unum convertuntur" (n. 300).

8.2.2 *The special nature of Eckhart's doctrine*

Several elements of Eckhart's teachings on the *transcendentia* belong to the traditional constituents of the doctrine in the thirteenth century. "Being", "one", "true" and "good" are "common" to all, "convertible" with each other, but differ according to their own *rationes*.[59] Among these notions there exists an order in the sense that " 'being' is first, next the 'one' comes, then the 'true', and fourth the 'good' ";[60] the series corresponds with the order of the treatises I–IV in the Work of Propositions.

The phrase "metaphysics of the transcendentals" has the disadvantage that it does not sufficiently express the special character and originality of Eckhart's thought. His conception of transcendentality is different from other medieval models, including that of Aquinas. The distinctive features of Eckhart's doctrine are: (i) the inclusion of "spiritual perfections", like "justice"; (ii) the doubling of the general terms in *abstracta* and *concreta*; (iii) the identification of the transcendentals with God; and (iv) the connection of these terms with the Trinity.

The inclusion of the "spiritual perfections"

When, in the General Prologue, Eckhart lists the *termini generales*, he not only mentions "being" (*esse*), "unity", "truth" and "goodness" but also "wisdom" (*sapientia*).[61] This is not an isolated case. In other texts, the Meister designates *sapientia* and *justitia* as "spiritual" perfections and reckons them together with *ens* or *esse, unum, verum, bonum* among "the most general perfections".[62]

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[59] Cf. *Expositio sancti Evangelii secundum Iohannem*, nn. 561–562 (LW III, pp. 488–489).

[60] *Ibid.*, n. 547 (p. 478).

[61] Meister Eckhart, *Prologus generalis*, n. 8 (LW I, p. 152).

[62] Meister Eckhart, *In Sapientiam*, n. 41 (LW II, p. 363): "Spirituales autem perfectiones (…) huiusmodi perfectiones, puta iustitia, sapientia et similia". *In Ecclesiasticum*, n. 52 (LW II, p. 281): "Ens autem sive esse et omnis perfectio, maxime generalis, puta esse, unum, verum, bonum, lux, iustitia et huiusmodi, dicuntur de deo et creaturis analogice". Cf. B. Mojsisch, "*Perfectiones spirituales*—Meister Eckharts Theorie

The inclusion of perfections in the doctrine of the transcendentals is in itself not new. We find something similar in John Duns Scotus, who came to Paris in the same year as Eckhart (1302). In his main account of the transcendentals (*Ordinatio* I, d. 8), he discusses the "doubt" how "wisdom" can be considered a *transcendens*, because it is not common (*commune*) to all things. For Scotus the question is not a real problem, since for him "commonness" is no longer a necessary condition; he determines the concept of *transcendens* in a purely negative manner as "what is not contained under any genus". This definition renders possible an extension of the transcendental domain to what he calls "pure perfections" like "wisdom" (see ch. 9.2.2). They do not include in their nature any limitation and can therefore be said both of the infinite and finite.

Eckhart does not give an explanation for the extension of the transcendental domain. The concept "most general perfection" seems to become the more encompassing notion, including the traditional transcendentals, such as "being", of which it is said that it is convertible with "perfect",[63] as well as the "spiritual" perfections that can be analogically said of God and creature. What is typical of Eckhart is the ample room he gives to a *moral* perfection, "justice" (*iustitia*). His understanding of this term retains its rich historical connotation: philosophical (as virtue), theological (as divine name) and biblical (the teaching of the "justification" of the sinner). "Justice" is his paradigm of "virtue" that together with the "moral good" (*honestum*) would be the subject-matter of treatise VI of the Work of Propositions. Ethics is integrated into Eckhart's project: he is not only a *Lesemeister* ("lector"), but above all a *Lebemeister*.

The inclusion of "justice" could be inspired by a thinker who, as we shall see, influenced Eckhart's doctrine of the transcendentals. Henry of Ghent reckons "justice" among "the first intentions" of the intellect in addition to "good", "being" and "true"; these notions express ontological perfections both in God and creature. But whereas in Henry "justice" is incidentally mentioned, it plays in Eckhart an exemplary part.

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des geistigen Vollkommenheiten. Mit possibilitätsphilosophischen Reflexionen", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift fur Jan A. Aertsen zum 65. Geburstag*, Berlin – New York 2003 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 30), pp. 511–534.

[63] Cf. Meister Eckhart, *In Sapientiam*, n. 293 (LW II, p. 628): "(…) esse, quod cum uno, vero et bono convertitur, toto et perfecto".

The doubling of the general terms in abstracta *and* concreta

Eckhart's structuring of the *Opus propositionum* deserves further attention. Each of the treatises, he remarks, is divided into two parts (*bipartitus*). First, propositions about the term itself are stated, then propositions about the opposite of this term.[64] Eckhart thinks in oppositions, but this does not mean that his metaphysics, like Duns Scotus's, is structured according to the scheme of "disjunctive" transcendentals.[65] "Nothing", "many", "false", and "evil" are the opposites of the transcendental terms "being", "one", "true" and "good", but are not themselves (disjunctive) transcendentals.

Another detail in the titles of the first four treatises should be noted. In addition to the transcendental term and its opposite a third term is introduced each time. The general term is as it were "doubled" in an *abstractum* and a *concretum*: Treatise I deals with *esse* and *ens*, tr. II with *unitas* and *unum*, tr. III with *veritas* and *verum*, tr. IV with *bonitas* and *bonum*. What is the sense of this "doubling"?

An "abstract" term, for instance "whiteness" (*albedo*), signifies a form or perfection *in abstracto*, that is, without the supposit or subject of the form; a "concrete" term, for instance "the white" (*album*), signifies the same form *in concreto*, that is, as "concretized" in a subject. A source for the distinction between "abstract" and "concrete" was Boethius's treatise *De hebdomadibus*, of which the second axiom reads " 'To be' (*esse*) and 'that which is' (*id quod est*) are diverse (*diversum*)". The proposition claims a difference between the abstract term *esse* and its concrete counterpart *ens*, which Boethius also designates as the distinction between *quo est* and *quod est*. One should remember that *quo est* and *quod est* are the basic terms in treatise XII of the Work of Propositions. Eckhart also incorporates the Boethian metaphysics into his project.

How is the diversity expressed in Boethius's second axiom to be interpreted? In his commentary on *De hebdomadibus*, Thomas Aquinas concludes that "being itself" (*ipsum esse*) is not signified as "the subject of being" and that one cannot therefore say that it "is". The subject of

[64] Meister Eckhart, *Prologus generalis*, n. 3 (LW I, p. 149).

[65] Contra M. P. Schirpenbach, *Wirklichkeit als Beziehung. Das strukturontologische Schema der Termini generales im Opus Tripartitum Meister Eckharts*, Münster 2004 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. Neue Folge, 66), pp. 154–177.

being, which subsists in itself (*in se ipso subsistit*), is rather "that which is" (*id quod est*); *esse* is a non-subsisting principle, by which something "is".[66] Against the background of such a reading Eckhart's first preliminary remark in the General Prologue must be understood. It is concerned with the abstract *termini generales* "*esse*", "unity", "truth", "wisdom" and "goodness", and emphasizes their ontological priority in relation to the concrete subjects: one should not conceive them after the manner of accidents, for they are prior to anything. The "abstract" character of these terms is not the result of an abstraction of the intellect, but expresses their independent ontological state: the *abstracta* do not receive being from, in and through their subjects, but precede them. The relation between what is abstract and the concrete subject is marked by exemplarity and participation.[67]

In a German sermon, Eckhart characterizes the distinction between the abstract and the concrete as the core of his teaching: "Whoever understands the distinction between justice and the just understands every thing I say".[68] How essential this issue is for Eckhart's thought also appears from a concluding observation in his Commentary on John. With respect to the first verses in the Gospel he formulates 15 propositions concerning the relation between the principle and that which proceeds from the principle. He next illustrates these propositions by just as many theses concerning the relation between justice and the just (man). In conclusion he establishes that all of what has been said becomes clear "in comparing the just with justice, that which is (*ens*) with its being (*esse*), the good (*bonum*) with goodness (*bonitas*), and in general (*universaliter*) the concrete with its abstract (*concretum suo abstracto*)".[69] The relation between the abstract and the concrete is a generalization of the double structure of the transcendental terms.

The view that these notions can be considered abstractly and concretely is not new. The focus of the doctrine in the thirteenth century was on the concrete terms *ens, unum, verum*, and *bonum*. Albertus Magnus, for example, points out that these four are convertible with one another, if they are taken "concretely", not, however, if they are

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[66] Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio libri Boetii De ebdomadibus*, lect. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. L, Rome 1992, p. 27).

[67] Meister Eckhart, *Prologus generalis*, n. 8 (LW I, pp. 152–153). Cf. *In Sapientiam*, n. 44 (LW II, pp. 366–367), with the model *iustitia-iustum*.

[68] Meister Eckhart, *Predigt* 6 (in: *Die deutschen Werke* [= DW], edited on behalf of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Stuttgart 1936–, Vol. I, p. 105).

[69] Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 26 (LW III, p. 22).

taken "abstractly", except in God.[70] In Eckhart the double consideration of the *termini generales* receives greater importance than beforehand. The new meaning of this doubling is closely connected with another feature of his doctrine of the transcendentals:

Identification of the transcendentals with God

1. The first proposition of the *Opus propositionum, Esse est Deus*, is explicated by Eckhart in the General Prologue. The inversion of the traditional theo-ontological thesis "God is being" is typical of his approach. He does not mention the first propositions of the next treatises, but we may assume that they likewise maintain the identity of the abstract terms "Unity", "Truth" and "Goodness" with God. Eckhart does not formulate the first proposition on the opposite term, "nothing", either. It seems, however, plausible that this thesis claims the "nothingness" (*nihileitas* or *nulleitas*) of the creature, considered in itself.[71]

Concerning the concrete term in the titles of the first four treatises: *ens, unum, verum, bonum,* respectively, all the four *notanda* in the second Prologue are of importance, for they are general propositions bearing upon them:

(i) "God alone is properly (*proprie*) being, one, true and good".
(ii) "From him all things are and are one, true and good".
(iii) "All things immediately owe to him the fact that they are and that they are one, true and good".
(iv) "When I say 'this' being, or 'this' one, or 'that' one, 'this' or 'that' true, ['this' or 'that' good], 'this' or 'that' adds absolutely nothing of entity, unity, truth or goodness to being, one, true and good".[72]

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[70] Albert the Great, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 46, a. 13 (ed. Borgnet, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. 26, Paris 1893, p. 446).

[71] On this proposition, J. A. Aertsen, "Der 'Systematiker' Eckhart", pp. 210–214. Eckhart uses the neologisms *nihileitas* in *Sermo* XXXVII, n. 375 (LW IV, p. 321) and *nulleitas* in *In Ecclesiasticum*, n. 61 (LW II, p. 290) and *Sermo* XV/2, n. 158 (LW IV, p. 150).

[72] Meister Eckhart, *Prologus in opus propositionum*, n. 4 (LW I, pp. 167–168): "Notandum ergo prooemialiter primo quod solus deus proprie est ens, unum, verum et bonum. Secundo quod ab ipso omnia sunt, unum sunt, vera sunt et bona sunt. Tertio quod ab ipso immediate omnia habent quod sunt, quod unum sunt, quod vera sunt, quod bona sunt. Quarto: cum dico hoc ens aut unum hoc aut unum istud, verum hoc et istud, li hoc et istud nihil prorsus addunt seu adiciunt entitatis, unitatis, veritatis aut bonitatis super ens, unum, verum, bonum".

It is striking that the Meister not only identifies the abstract transcendental terms with God, but also, in the first *notandum*, the concrete terms *ens, unum, verum, bonum*. He supports the proposition "God alone is properly being, one, true and good" by making references, with respect to each transcendental individually, to authoritative texts of Scripture, philosophers and patristic authors. He so gives the impression that the proposition is a traditional teaching.

> That "God alone is properly being" is evident from Exodus (3:14): "I am who am", from John Damascene who says that the first name of God is "That which is" (*id quod est*), and from Parmenides and Melissus, the first philosophers, who held that there is only one being.
>
> That "God alone is properly one" is evident from Deuteronomy (6:4): God is one", and from the fact that the Neoplatonic philosopher Proclus and the *Liber De causis* often call God by the name One or Unity.
>
> That "God alone is properly true" is manifest from the Gospel of John (14:6): "I am the truth", and from Augustine who states that "God is truth, because God is light".
>
> That "God alone is properly good" is evident from Luke (10:8): "No one is good save God", from Dionysius the Areopagite who holds that the first name of God is the Good, and from Proclus who in his *Elements of Theology* (prop. 12) says that "the principle and first cause of all beings is the good".[73]

It is true that from the beginning of the doctrine of the transcendentals "being", "one", "true" and "good" were also treated as divine names, but this aspect acquires in Eckhart a new accent by his *identification* of these determinations with God. He confirms the identity by making a distinction within the concrete transcendentals (which is alluded to in the fourth *notandum*). Whereas God is properly "being", "one", "true" and "good", every other thing is "*this* being", namely a stone, a lion, or a man, and "*this* one", "*this* true", "*this* good". The distinction of *ens* and *ens hoc aut hoc* plays a prominent role in his work.[74]

Eckhart's understanding of this distinction is quite different from the way another representative of the "German Dominican School", Dietrich of Freiberg, interpreted it (see 8.1.2). For him the distinction refers to the order between the first and second transcendental, *ens* and *quid*. The latter notion adds a formal determination to the *ratio*

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[73] *Ibid*., nn. 5–8 (pp. 168–170).

[74] *Ibid*., n. 8 (p. 170). Cf. *In Sapientiam*, n. 98 (LW II, pp. 432–434), n. 178 (pp. 513–514), n. 282 (pp. 614–615). Cf. *In Iohannem*, n. 611 (LW III, p. 533); *Sermo* LV, n. 546 (LW IV, p. 457).

of "being", by which it is determined to "this or that being" (*hoc vel hoc ens*). For Eckhart, however, the distinction between *ens* and *ens hoc aut hoc* is not one between transcendentals, but between what is "common" or transcendental and "proper" and distinct. He appeals to Augustine's reduction of "this or that good" to the subsisting good in book VIII of *De trinitate* and identifies the distinction with the difference between God and creature.

Eckhart's model was Henry of Ghent's "new way" to God from the first concepts of the intellect (see ch. 7.3.2).[75] These notions lead to knowledge of God's quiddity in general through a twofold abstraction. The first is the abstraction of the universal and common from the particular, for instance, the *bonum universale* from the *bonum hoc et illud*. The result of this abstraction is a concept that is analogically common to God and creature. The second abstraction is the complete separation of the form from matter, which leads to the *bonum subsistens* that is God. Henry concludes that, "as it is with the understanding of 'good', so it is with the understanding of 'being', 'true', 'beautiful' and 'just' ".[76]

But there is an obvious difference between Henry of Ghent and Eckhart. Whereas in Henry the opposition between the particular "this or that" and the subsistent form proper to God is mediated by the universal form as something analogically common to God and creature, Eckhart *immediately* relates the distinction between *ens* and *ens hoc aut hoc* to God and creature. "This" being tastes of a negation, since it is not "that" being; it is the domain of division and distinction, which are the marks of the creatures. God, however, is not "this" or "that" being, but "indistinct".[77] This opposition has consequences for Eckhart's doctrine of the transcendentals.

2. The identification of the distinction between *ens* and *ens hoc aut hoc* with the difference of God and creature implies that the creature, insofar as it is "this" or "that" being, "falls" away from the "being" that is God. Union with God requires that a human being should be

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[75] Cf. Th. Kobusch, "Lesemeistermetaphysik—Lebemeistermetaphysik. Zur Einheit der Philosophie Meister Eckharts", in: A. Speer / L. Wegener (eds.), *Meister Eckhart in Erfurt*, pp. 239–258, in particular pp. 247–249.

[76] Henry of Ghent, *Summa quaestionum ordinarium*, a. 24, q. 6 (ed. L. Badius, Paris 1520, fol. 142vS–V).

[77] Cf. Meister Eckhart, *In Sapientiam*, n. 98 (LW II, pp. 432–433).

"detached" from that which is proper to the creaturely and empty himself from all particularity (*hoc et hoc*). "God is in everything, insofar as it a being (*ens*), but in none, insofar as it is this being (*hoc ens*)".[78] A creature should be transformed into a being *as being*—the reduplication excludes everything foreign to it. Eckhart's metaphysics develops into what one could call an "ethics of the transcendentals": the creature should become an *ens, unum, verum, bonum* as such.

The process of detachment is the condition for a new relation between God and creature, that of father and son. Eckhart explains his typical teaching of the birth of God in the human soul through the relation of formal causality between *iustitia* and *iustus*, that is, the relationship of an abstract spiritual perfection to its concrete counterpart. The just (man) receives his entire being solely from justice. Justice and the just, insofar as he is just, are entirely one; they differ only in that justice bears, is the father of the just, and the just is born, is the son of justice.[79]

3. *Commune* belongs to Eckhart's "basic terms": The title of treatise VIII of the Work of Propositions is "On the common (*De communi*) and the indistinct, and their opposites, the proper *(proprio*) and distinct". The treatise is closely connected with the treatises on the transcendentals, because "commonness" was generally seen as a constitutive feature of these notions: they are not restricted to one genus but are common to things. According to the different conceptions of commonness the conceptions of transcendentality vary. For Aquinas the idea of *ens commune* refers to *finite being*, for Eckhart "commonness" and "indistinction" are properties of God; his conception is marked by the intertwinement of transcendence and transcendentality.

Illustrative is a sermon on the text *Deus caritas est* (1 John 4,8). *Caritas*—the basic term of treatise V—is "common", because it excludes nobody. In order to explain the identity of God and love, Eckhart thus has to show God's "commonness". To that end he makes two observa-

[78] Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 206 (LW III, p. 174).

[79] Meister Eckhart, *In Sapientiam*, n. 42 (LW II, p. 364): "iustus ut sic totum suum esse accipit ab ipsa iustitia, ita ut iustitia vere sit parens et pater iusti, et iustus ut sic vere sit proles genita et filius iustitiae"; n. 64 (LW II, p. 392): "Rursus notandum quod iustus, in quantum huiusmodi, totum esse suum habet et accipit a sola iustitia et est proles et filius proprie genitus a iustitia". Cf. J. Casteigt, *Connaissance et vérité chez Maître Eckhart. Seul le juste connaît la justice*, Paris 2006 (Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale, 91), "Appendix 3", pp. 411–435.

tions. First, "God is common (*Deus communis est*), because he is every being (*ens*) and the *esse* of all things". That this statement has by no means a pantheistic connotation in Eckhart's thought appears from the second observation, in which he emphasizes that precisely this commonness constitutes God's transcendence. Notice, he argues, that all that is common, insofar as it is common, is God, and that all that is not common, insofar as it is not common, is created. Every creature is something finite, limited, distinct and proper (*proprium*), and is therefore not "love".[80] The opposition of *commune* and *proprium*, which is expressed in the title of treat. VIII, is explicitly related to the distinction between God and creature.

Eckhart recognizes another sense of "common": the phrase "common to all" can also signify God's effect. The effect of the universal cause must be something *commune omnibus*, and this can only be "being" and what is convertible with it, such as "one", "true" and "good".[81] Eckhart understands "common" here in a more traditional manner as the mark of the transcendental notions.

Transcendentals and the Trinity

In his Commentary on John's Gospel, Eckhart twice presents a systematic exposition of the transcendentals "being", "one", "true" and "good". In both cases, the account is no end in itself, but is meant to explain the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.[82] Christianity is a monotheistic religion of a special nature, since it teaches that in the divine itself there is productivity and plurality, the eternal processions of the three Persons Father, Son and Spirit. They are one in the divine essence, but are really distinct from each other by their relations of origin. Eckhart's first application of the transcendentals to the Trinity

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[80] Meister Eckhart, *Sermo* VI/1, n. 51 (LW IV, pp. 51–52): "*Deus caritas est*, primo, quia caritas communis est, nullum excludens. Ex qua communitate nota duo. Primo, Quod deus communis est: omne ens et omne omnium esse ipse est (…). Secundo nota quod omne commune, in quantum commune, deus, et omne non commune, in quantum non commune, deus non est, sed creatum est. Omnis autem creatura finitum quoddam, limitatum, distinctum et proprium est, et sic iam non caritas est".

[81] Meister Eckhart, *Liber parabolum Genesis* [= *In Genesim II*], n. 86 (LW I, pp. 548): "Adhuc autem deus cum sit causa omnium et omnibus et quantum ad omnia, effectus eius, quem imprimit et imponit (…), necessario est quid commune omnibus. Hoc autem est solum esse et quae cum ente convertuntur, puta unum, verum, bonum".

[82] The two treatments are to be found in *In Iohannem*, nn. 511–518 (LW III, pp. 442–448) and nn. 561–562 (pp. 488–491).

is to be found in his Commentary on John 10:31 ("*Ego et pater unum sumus*"): it is the place in the Gospel, he notes, where the unity of the divine essence and the distinction of the Persons is expressed for the first time. For most thirteenth-century authors the teaching that God is triune is a datum of faith, not demonstrable by reason. Eckhart's intention, however, is to explain the Trinity through "natural reason",[83] and this effort is based on the doctrine of the transcendentals.

The Meister mentions three general conditions of these notions, on the basis of which they can accomplish this explanatory role: "being", "one", "true" and "good" properly belong to God, an identification typical of his doctrine; they are convertible with one another; and they are the *communia* that are participated in by all—their commonness extends to the creatures.[84] The explanatory function of the transcendentals requires, however, another feature, which Eckhart adds in his second account: these notions are really identical, but are distinguished from one another by the proper *ratio* or property of each.[85] Insofar as the relations between the transcendentals are marked by identity and distinction, there is a resemblance with the unity and distinction of the Trinity, but the analogy is imperfect. The divine Persons are *really* distinguished from another, not only conceptually, like the transcendentals.[86]

Eckhart's connection of the transcendentals with the Trinity is not something new in medieval thought, but has stronger roots in the Franciscan than in the Dominican tradition. A salient feature of the Franciscan form of the transcendental theory in the *Summa Halensis* and Bonaventure (see ch. IV) is the trinitarian motive. The first determinations of "being" are seen as "vestiges" of the Trinity; "one", "true" and "good" are founded in the threefold divine causality—efficient, exemplary and final—and "appropriated" to one of the Persons: *unum* to the Father, *verum* to the Son, and *bonum* to the H. Spirit. Eckhart's

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[83] Cf. the remark in the *Tabula auctoritatum* (LW III, p. 687): "haec singula ostenduntur naturali ratione".

[84] Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 512 (LW III, p. 443): "Adhuc autem, quia in praemissis verbis quasi primo apertius fit mentio de patris et filii unitate pariter et distinctione, notandum quod haec quattuor: esse, unum, verum, bonum proprie deo conveniunt, convertuntur et sunt communia participata ab omnibus".

[85] *Ibid.*, n. 562 (p. 489): "sciendum quod haec quattuor praemissa idem sunt et convertuntur realiter quantum ad suppositum sive subiectum, distinguuntur autem ab invicem propria ratione sive proprietate uniuscuiusque".

[86] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 360 (pp. 304–305).

exposition refers to these appropriations, but is more radical in its intention of seeking a rational understanding of the Trinity through the transcendental notions: "one" is the first "productive" principle, from which the "true" proceeds and through the mediation of the "true" the "good" proceeds (for the effect of the Trinitarian interpretation on the order of the transcendentals, see 8.2.3).

By way of a summary: Eckhart's explanation of the text "In propria venit" *(John 1,11)*

The distinctive features of Eckhart's doctrine of the transcendentals appear in several places of his *Opus expositionum*. A particularly instructive example is his explanation of the words *In propria venit* ("He <God> came unto his own") in John 1,11—a text that refers to the Incarnation of the Word. His exegesis of this text can serve as a summary of his views.

1. Typical for Eckhart's intention is that at the very beginning he repeats a reference to Augustine, which he had already made at the opening of his commentary on John. In the *Confessions* (VII,9,13), Augustine states that he had read the verse "In the beginning was the Word" and a large part of the first chapter of John's Gospel in "the books of Plato", not, however, the passage starting in John 1,11: "He came unto his own". But according to Eckhart natural reason (*ratio naturalis*) brings convincing evidence for these words.[87] His approach corresponds with the "rational" character of his procedure, which he had stressed in the conclusion of the General Prologue, and expresses the same intention that motivated his explanation of the divine Trinity. His argumentation is based, as we shall see, on a metaphysics of the transcendentals.

The text *in propria venit* can be read as indicating the coming of the Word in the world it had created. Eckhart advances three expositions of this reading, in which he plays with the various connotations of the term *propria*, one of his "basic words". The last exposition he labels as "more theological" (*magis theologice*). It appeals to a liturgical text and understands the "own" to which God came as "the acts of having

[87] *Ibid.*, n. 96 (p. 83). Cf. *ibid.*, n. 2 (p. 4).

mercy and of saving".[88] Apparently the two preceding explanations are of a "more philosophical" nature.

2. The first exposition interprets "his own" from the close relation between an "abstract" and a concrete transcendental. "Note that nothing is so much one's own (*proprium*) as that which is (*ens*) of *esse* and the creature of the creator". But God is *esse*—a reference to the first proposition of the *Opus propositionum*—and he is creator. Hence it is said "He came to his own".[89] In another text, Eckhart determines the relation between the divine *esse* and the created *ens* through the concept of "nearness". Nothing is as near (*prope*) to *esse*, which is God, as every being (*ens*), because there is no intermediary (*medium*) between them.[90]

3. Whereas in the first exposition the abstract *esse* is identified with God, the second exposition is based on the identification of the concrete transcendentals with God. The *propria* into which God "came" are being (*esse sive ens*), the one, true, and good. God has these four as his own because he is "the first" which, according to one of Eckhart's favourite propositions from the *Liber De causis* (prop. 21), is "rich through itself" (*dives per se*). God has these four because he is "rich"; he has them as his own because he is "through himself". For all other things the four transcendentals are "guests" and "strangers", but for God they are "members of the household"—the terminology is taken from Ephesians 2,19.[91]

Eckhart's explanation reminds us of his first *notandum* in the second Prologue: "God alone is properly (*proprie*) being, one, true and good". This association is not without foundation, for the Meister's next remarks correspond to the second and the third *notandum* in this Prologue. Therefore, he states, we are first taught that God is and

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[88] *Ibid.*, n. 98 (p. 84).

[89] *Ibid.*, n. 96 (p. 83): "Notandum ergo quod nihil tam proprium quam ens ipsi esse et creatura creatori. Deus autem esse est, ipse et creator est. Hoc est ergo quod hic dicitur: *in propria venit*".

[90] Cf. Meister Eckhart, *In Sapientiam*, nn. 164–165 (LW II, pp. 499–500).

[91] Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 97 (LW III, pp. 83–84): "Secundo sic exponatur: propria ista, in quae deus venit, sunt esse sive ens, unum, verum, bonum. Haec enim quattuor deus habet propria, utpote 'primum', quod 'est dives per se'. Habet ista, quia 'dives'; habet propria, quia 'per se'. Praedicta enim quattuor omnibus citra primum 'hospites' sunt 'et advenae', 'domestica' deo".

works in all things and comes to all insofar as they are, are one, are true and are good. Second, we are taught that through his coming God immediately and with no other agent works being, unity, truth and goodness in all things, although, Eckhart adds, "in an analogical sense" (*analogice*).[92] This addition is not found in the second Prologue and is a strong indication that "analogy" belongs to the subject matter of the first treatise of the "Work of Propositions", as it is confirmed by an explicit reference of Eckhart at another place of his work.[93]

4. The doctrine of analogy is closely connected with the doctrine of the transcendentals. This connection becomes apparent, when, in accordance with his exegesis of the words *In propria venit*, Eckhart explains the next passage in his commentary on John: *Sui enim non receperunt*. "His own received him not", first, because things do not have from themselves (*ex se*) or from what is their own (*ex propriis sibi*) that they are, are one, true and good; second, because their power to receive is only from God; third, because what is received does not take root (*non figunt radices*) in them; and fourth, because it is proper (*proprium*) to God to be indistinct, and he alone is distinguished by his indistinction, while it is proper to the creature to be distinct. What is distinct, however, does not receive *proprie* what is indistinct.[94]

In this exposition, Eckhart uses the same expressions as in his key text on analogy in his explanation of the words "They that eat me, shall yet hunger" in his commentary on Ecclesiasticus 24,29 (see 8.2.5). Creatures are analogically related to God, which means that they have the transcendental perfections totally from something outside (*ab aliquo extra*). Consequently, these perfections are not positively rooted (*radicatum*) in them.[95]

5. Eckhart adds an observation to his exposition of the text *In propria venit*, which resumes his understanding of the two basic words *commune* and *proprium*. Note, he argues, that all that is created, because it is "this" or "that" (*hoc aut hoc*) and something distinct, is proper (*proprium*) to some genus, species or particular thing. God, however,

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[92] *Ibid.*, n. 97 (p. 84).

[93] Cf. Meister Eckhart, *In Ecclesiasticum*, n. 53 (LW II, p. 282): "Nos autem secundum veritatem analogiae intelligendo, sicut ex primo Libro propositionum declaratur, (…)".

[94] Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 99 (LW III, p. 85).

[95] Cf. Meister Eckhart, *In Ecclesiasticum*, nn. 52–53 (LW II, pp. 281–282).

is not something distinct or proper to some nature, but is common to all (*commune omnibus*), for he is outside and beyond (*super*) every genus. That God is "common" is shown by the commonness of his effect—a reference to another level of transcendental "commonness". "The proof of this is that being (*ens*), God's effect, is not in a genus and is not proper to a genus, but is common to every genus (*commune omni genere*)". When God came into this world, assumed a created nature and became man, it thus was "as if he came to what is proper from the height of what is common".[96]

6. Finally Eckhart infers several "moral" teachings from his expositions. From the second one—God is properly being, one, true and good—it follows that the further something is removed from the many and aims toward the one, the more perfect and divine it is. The reason for this is that one, being, true and good are convertible (*convertuntur*). To depart from the one is therefore to fall from the true, to fall from the good, and—Eckhart adds in one breath—to fall from God.[97] This teaching reflects his "ethics of the transcendentals".

8.2.3 *The order of the transcendentals*

Scholars have typified Eckhart's metaphysics differently: as a "metaphysics of being", a "metaphysics of unity", or a "metaphysics of the Word".[98] All these designations find some justification in Eckhart's work on the condition that they are not seen as alternatives that exclude one another. The term "metaphysics of the transcendentals" integrates the perspectives of being, unity and truth, but at the same

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[96] Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 103 (LW III, pp. 88–89): "Rursus: *in propria venit*. Notandum quod creatum omne, cum sit hoc aut hoc, distinctum quid, proprium est alicui generi, speciei vel singulari. Deus autem non est quid distinctum aut proprium alicui naturae, sed commune omnibus. Est enim extra et super omne genus. Probat hoc ipsum ens, effectus dei, quod non est in genere nec proprium alicui generi, sed communi omni generi. Deus ergo in hunc mundum veniens, creaturam assumens, factus homo, quasi de fastigio communis venit in propria".

[97] *Ibid.*, nn. 113–114 (pp. 97–99).

[98] "Metaphysics of being", cf. K. Albert, *Meister Eckharts These vom Sein*; "Metaphysics of unity", cf. W. Goris, *Einheit als Prinzip und Ziel* (critical); "Metaphysics of the Word", cf. E. Zum Brunn / A. de Libera, *Maître Eckhart. Métaphysique du Verbe et Théologie négative*, Paris 1984 (Bibliothèque des Archives de Philosophie. Nouvelle série, 42).

time leaves room for differences in focus, for Eckhart understands the order of the transcendentals in various ways.

A good illustration of this are his reflections in the Prologue to the *Opus propositionum*, in which he attributes a primacy to the "one", and a few lines later to the "true". He refers to Boethius who, in his *Consolation of Philosophy* (III,11), teaches that as the good and the true are founded (*fundantur*) and established (*figuntur*) through being (*esse*) and in being, so also being is founded and established in the one and through the one. In the next passage he observes that "these three [namely, being, one and good] have in the true and through the true what they are". For that which not truly is is not, nor is that one which is not truly one, nor is that good which is not truly good.[99]

Even when Eckhart adopts the common order of the transcendentals—namely "being" first, then followed by "one", "true" and "good", respectively—, he gives a particular interpretation to this order, which is the effect of his account of the Trinity based on these notions (in his commentary on the Gospel according to John).

The primordiality of unum

The application and appropriation of the transcendentals to the Trinitarian processes introduces a dynamic into the order of these notions, from which "being" is excluded. Therefore, Eckhart starts his account with a negative description of "being" (*esse* or *ens*—the terms are used interchangeably): it is "not a principle of any production", for two reasons. The *ratio* of "being" relates to the inner (*ad intra*) and essence of a thing, and it is "absolute" and "indeterminate". From anything that is indistinct and indeterminate proceeds nothing. Hence "the theologians" say that being or essence in the divine is "unbegotten and not begetting".[100]

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[99] Meister Eckhart, *Prologus in opus propositionum*, n. 9 (LW I, p. 171): "Praeterea Boethius *De consolatione* docet quod, sicut bonum et verum fundantur et figuntur per esse et in esse, sic et esse fundatur et figitur in uno et per unum"; n. 10 (p. 171): "Nam tria praemissa in vero et per verum habent id quod sunt. Non enim est quod non vere est, nec unum quod non vere unum est, nec bonum est quod non vere bonum est".

[100] Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 512 (LW III, p. 443): "Esse autem, tum quia ad intus et essentiam respicit, tum quia absolutum et indeterminatum, nullius productionis principium est secundum sui rationem. Ab indistincto enim et indeterminato nihil procedit. (…) Hinc est etiam quod theologi dicunt esse seu essentiam nec generare nec generari". In the second account, *ibid.*, n. 562 (p. 489), the *ratio entis* is called

The effect of the dynamization becomes apparent in Eckhart's explanation of the next notion in the order of transcendentals, *unum*. The notion has a more prominent place in his doctrine than in earlier medieval accounts, so that the question could arise of whether Eckhart's thought is an ontology or rather a "henology", that is, a doctrine of the one.[101] According to the Meister, "one" is the *primum determinatum* ("what is first determinated") and consequently the *primum productivum*.[102]

"One" is that which first determinates "being", since it adds a negation to "being". That was the common view in accordance with the Aristotelian understanding of the notion: the transcendental "one" adds the negation of "division"; it signifies "undivided being". But Eckhart's view implies more than this traditional element, for he claims that the concept of "one" contains a double negation. "One" adds "the negation of negation" (*negatio negationis*), for "one" is the denial of "many", a concept which contains a negation in its own turn in the sense that "this" being is not "that" being. His conclusion is that the "one", although negatively expressed, means in reality something positive. Unlike Aquinas, who maintains the purely negative character of "one", the Meister underlines its positive meaning by calling "one" "the marrow" (*medulla*) and "the summit (*apex*) of the purest affirmation". *Unum* signifies the "purity" and "fullness" of being, which is not yet expressed by the term *ens* itself.[103]

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quid abiectum et indistinctum. The term "abject", which generally has a pejorative accent, is unusual in the medieval accounts; its meaning is not clear. In the volume *Meister Eckhart, Teacher and Preacher*, ed. B. McGinn, Mahwah, N.J., 1986, p. 187, *quid abiectum* is translated as "something commonplace".

[101] Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Ontology and Henology in Medieval Philosophy (Thomas Aquinas, Master Eckhart and Berthold of Moosburg)", in: E. P. Bos / P.A. Meyer (eds.), *On Proclus and his Influence in Medieval Philosophy*, Leiden 1992 (Philosophia Antiqua, 53), pp. 120–140. W. Goris, "Ontologie oder Henologie? Zur Einheitsmetaphysik Meister Eckharts", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, Berlin – New York 1998 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 26), pp. 694–703.

[102] For Eckhart's doctrine of the one, A. De Libera, "Uno, unione e unità in Meister Eckhart; dall'uno trascendentale all'Uno trascendente", in: V. Melchiorre (ed.), *L'Uno e i molti*, Milano 1990 (Metafisica e Storia della Metafisica, 8), pp. 249–282. W. Goris, *Einheit als Prinzip und Ziel*, in particular pp. 197–206 for the historical background of the notion *negatio negationis*.

[103] Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 513 (LW III, p. 444): "Unum vero, quod inter praedicta quattuor immediatius se habet ad esse, et primo et minimo determinat ipsum, propter hoc ut primum determinatum est"; n. 562 (LW III, p. 489): "Ipsum vero unum ex sui proprietate distinctionem indicat. (…) nihil addens super ens nisi solam negationem negationis". Cf. the account of the transcendental *unum* in the

Because the "one" determines "being" in this sense, it has the property of being the *primum productivum*. *Unum* is the first principle ("Father") of every emanation, both in the divine, that is, the eternal procession of the Persons, and in the created, the temporal production of the creatures. Eckhart expresses the primordiality of *unum* through a cascade of verbs: the "one" "abounds (*redundat*), "germinates" (*germinat*), "flowers" (*floret*), "inspires" (*spirat*) and "diffuses itself" (*diffunditur*) into every being, both uncreated and created.[104]

Verum *and* bonum*: Hierarchisation of the transcendentals*

1. From the "one", as Eckhart continues his account, "the totality of created being" (*universitas totius entis creati*) proceeds. But he immediately introduces a distinction: "being" (*ens*) in its full extent is first divided into extramental being, *ens reale* or *ens naturale*, and intramental being or "cognitive being" (*ens cognitivum*). The terminology is reminiscent of the distinction between "real being" and "conceptional being" (*ens conceptionale*) in Dietrich of Freiberg (see 8.1.2). But unlike Dietrich, Eckhart relates the primary division of "being" to the distinction between "the true" and "the good": *verum* pertains to *ens cognitivum*, *bonum* to *ens reale*.[105] The effect is a dissociation of both notions that raises a tension in his exposition. "True" and "good" are distinguished on the basis of a *division* of being, though a general condition of the transcendentals, mentioned by Eckhart at the beginning of his account, is that they are *communia*.

The dissociation of *verum* and *bonum* is supported by Eckhart through references to different philosophical authorities. He cites two statements from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which suggest the heterogeneity of the two notions and were often referred to in medieval discussions of the transcendentals. The first statement is taken from the sixth Book (c. 4, 1027b 25), in which Aristotle holds that "truth and falsity do not exist, as good and evil, in things, but in the mind". Albertus

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Commentary on *Sapientia* 7,27 ("And since Wisdom is one, it can do all things"), nn. 147–148 (LW II, pp. 485–486).

[104] Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 513 (LW III, p. 444); n. 515 (p. 446).

[105] *Ibid.*, n. 514 (p. 445). "Sciendum ergo quod ens secundum totum sui ambitum prima sui divisione dividitur in ens reale extra animam, divisum in decem praedicamenta, et in ens in anima sive in ens cognitivum (…). Ex quo patet quod [verum] pertinet ad ens cognitivum et ad cognitionem, bonum autem pertinet ad ens reale sive ad ens naturale".

Magnus and Thomas Aquinas had advanced this claim as an objection to the convertibility of "being" and "true".[106] The other reference is to Aristotle's assertion in the third book of the *Metaphysics* that there is no goodness in mathematical objects, a statement to which Eckhart attaches considerable importance, for he quotes it several times. Aristotle argues that in many things not all kinds of causes are found. It is impossible, for instance, that the nature of the good and the end is in things that do not possess motion. For that reason, he concludes (III, c. 2, 996a 29), nothing is demonstrated in mathematics on the basis of the final cause. Eckhart reads Aristotle's distinction between natural and mathematical objects as an argument for the heterogeneity of the good and the true.

To Eckhart's mind the dissociation of *verum* and *bonum* is also confirmed by Neoplatonic authorities. From Proclus and the *Liber De causis* it is clear "that nature or natural being is under cognitive being (*sub ente cognitivo*) and is produced into being by its mediation (*illo mediante*)".[107] The reference to the *Book of Causes* concerns its explanation of prop. 9, which expresses the Neoplatonic hierarchical world view and the idea of a mediated creation: "The first Cause created Intelligence without an intermediary and creates Soul and Nature and the rest of things by mediation of Intelligence".[108] The influence of this text is manifest in Eckhart's subsequent description of the order of created things: "First cognitive being proceeds, and from it being outside in natural things descends, as lower (*sub*) and later (*posterius*) than cognitive being. In this way the 'true' immediately descends from the 'one', but the 'good' descends from the 'one' by the mediation of the 'true'".[109] Since *verum* pertains to cognitive being and *bonum* to natural being, and the intellect is above nature, the effect is the hierarchisation of the notions of "true" and "good".

Eckhart not only appeals to authorities in order to show the dissociation of *verum* and *bonum*, he also advances arguments. He suggests

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[106] Albert the Great, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 46, a. 13 (ed. Borgnet, Vol. 26, pp. 446b–447a). Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 2, *sed contra* and *resp.*

[107] Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 514 (LW III, p. 445), n. 518 (p. 448).

[108] *Liber de causis*, prop. 9 (ed. A. Pattin, in: *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 28 (1966), p. 157).

[109] Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 518 (LW III, pp. 447–448): "(…) in creatis, ubi primo procedit ens cognitivum et ab ipso descendit ens extra in rebus naturalibus, utpote sub illo et posterius illo. Sic enim (…) verum descendit immediate ab uno, bonum autem ab uno mediante vero".

that the dissociation is implied in the recognition of the difference between the *ratio* of things and the natural things themselves, but the phrase *ratio* is ambiguous in his considerations. It sometimes does not signify the intelligible concept of a thing in the human intellect but the exemplary idea in the divine mind. This tendency may be strengthened by the appropriation of "the true" to the second Person of the Trinity, the Son, who is *logos* or *ratio* and the Word. "The *ratio* or the Word", he states, "leads the totality of things by means of the activity of the intellect as principle, and the true is in the soul".[110] Note the shift in the meaning of *ratio* in Eckhart's argument that the *ratio veri* is prior to the *ratio boni*: the *ratio* of the good is in the intellect, not in things, and is itself not good but rather *ratio, logos, verbum* and *principium* of the good.[111]

The consequences for the place of the "good" in the order of the transcendentals become apparent in the second text, in which Eckhart applies these notions to the Trinity. Whereas in the first text he regards *unum* as the first principle in every emanation, both in the divine and in the created, he holds in his second account that the "good", since it relates to what is outside (*ad extra*), is properly the principle and source of the creatures. Because something is created it is good, and because it is good it is created. In view of this convertibility, "the ancients were right in saying that the good is not in God, much less than in mathematical objects, but that he is called 'good', insofar as he is the cause, the *ratio* and the principle of the good".[112]

It is "rightly" said that "the good is not in God". Eckhart's approval of this conclusion is remarkable, for it contradicts the first general

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[110] *Ibid.*, n. 514 (p. 445): "Aliter autem loquendum est omnino de rerum rationibus et cognitione ipsarum, aliter de rebus extra in natura"; n. 562 (p. 490): "Filius ipse logos sive ratio et verbum est, Ioh. 1: 'in principio erat verbum'. Ratio enim sive verbum rerum universitati praeest intellectu principiante, et verum est in anima". Cf. V. Lossky, *Théologie negative et connaissance de Dieu chez Maître Eckhart*, Paris 1960 (Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale, 48), pp. 220–227.

[111] Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 518 (LW III, p. 448): "Patet et hoc eo quod ratio veri prior est et simplicior quam ratio boni, quin immo et ipsa ratio boni in intellectu est, non in rebus nec ipsa est bona, sed potius est ratio, scilicet logos, verbum, principium scilicet et causa boni".

[112] *Ibid.*, n. 562 (pp. 490–491): "Bonum autem ex sui proprietate non iam ad intus respicit, sed ad extra. (…) Unde secundum hoc bonum ipsum proprie principium est et fons creaturarum; eo enim quod quid creatum est, bonum est, et quo bonum est, creatum est. (…) Et sub hoc sensu bene dicebant antiqui bonum non esse in deo, multo minus quam in mathematicis, sed ipsum nominari bonum pro tanto, quia ipse est causa, ratio et principium boni".

condition of the transcendentals, including the "good", he had formulated, namely that they properly belong to God. He believes that the claim is correct, because Aristotle's assertion that there is no good in mathematical objects *a fortiori* holds for God. It is notable that, in other texts, Eckhart adds that the *a fortiori* argument likewise applies to metaphysics. His conception of this discipline adopts Dietrich of Freiberg's view that metaphysics is distinguished from physics in that it leaves aside the extrinsic causes in its study of being. "The metaphysician, who considers the entity of things, proves nothing through extrinsic causes (…), but rather looks only to the formal cause, the ideal reason".[113]

In such a metaphysical conception the notion of "good" must lose its relevance, because it relates to what is outside and to the final cause. For Eckhart, *bonum*, which had a primordial place in the thirteenth-century origin of the doctrine in Philip the Chancellor's *Summa de bono*, is the last and the lowest in the order of the transcendentals: "it is in the rear (*retro*), below (*deorsum*) and the last (*postremum*) among all the *communia*".[114]

2. In the study of Eckhart in the last decades, considerable attention has been given to the Parisian Questions, since the position maintained in these texts differs from what is taught elsewhere in the Latin work. In the first two questions, dating from his first regency in Paris (1302–03), Eckhart discusses the relation between *esse* and *intelligere*, respectively in God (q. 1) and in spiritual creatures (q. 2).[115] He argues that God is not "being", but "understanding" (*Deus est intelligere*), a

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[113] Meister Eckhart, *In Genesim I*, n. 4 (LW I, pp. 187–188). Cf. *ibid.*, n. 68 (p. 232): "Nota: quamdiu res singula stat in verbo dei et universaliter in splendore intellectualis luminis, non dicitur: est bona, quia bonum est extra in rebus, verum autem in anima. Propter quod 'in mathematicis non est bonum', ut ait philosophus, *et multo minus in metaphysicis*". *In Genesim II*, n. 54 (LW I, p. 522); *In Iohannem*, n. 336 (LW III, p. 284). "Si enim 'in mathematicis non est bonum' et finis, sed solum causa formalis, ut ait philosophus, *quanto magis in metaphysicis et divinis*".

[114] Meister Eckhart, *In Genesim II*, n. 95 (LW I, p. 561): "Bonum autem retro est, deorsum est et postremum inter omnia communia, quae cum ente convertuntur".

[115] Cf. R. Imbach, *Deus est intelligere. Das Verhälnis von Sein und Denken in seiner Bedeutung für das Gottesverständnis bei Thomas von Aquin und in den Pariser Quaestionen Meister Eckhats*, Freiburg (Schwitzerl.) 1976 (Studia Friburgensia. Neue Folge, 53). *Maître Eckhart à Paris. Une critique médiévale de l'ontothéologie, Les Questions parisiennes no. 1 et no. 2 d'Eckhart*, Studies, Texts and Translations by E. Zum Brunn / Z. Kałuża / A. de Libera / P. Vignaux / E. Wéber, Paris 1984 (Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des hautes études. Section des sciences religieuses, 86).

thesis that contradicts the basic proposition of the *Opus tripartitum*, *Esse est Deus*. Obviously, the attention in scholarly discussion has mainly been focused on the opposite conceptions of "being", less on the structural agreements between Eckhart's thought in the Questions and in the *Opus*, which concern the dissociation of the notions *verum* and *bonum*.

Whereas the *Opus tripartitum* conceives "being" as properly belonging to God, the first and second Parisian Questions understand *ens* or *esse* as the mark of creatureliness in accordance with the fourth proposition in the *Liber De causis*, "the first of created things is being". Hence, Eckhart concludes, "as soon we come to being we come to a creature". "Being", then, has primarily the nature of something "creatable" and cannot consequently be predicated of God, who is the creator.[116]

In their arguments for the non-identity of esse and *intelligere*, both Parisian questions take the transcendental notions into consideration and claim the convertibility of *ens* and *bonum*. That (created) "being" is convertible with the "good" agrees with the lowest place attributed to *bonum* in the Commentary on John because it is related to what is created. After having stated the convertibility of "being" and "good", Eckhart goes on to say in the second Question that the *ratio* of the good or the final cause is not found in the intellect. Here he also refers to Aristotle's exposition in the third book of the *Metaphysics*, in which it is shown that none of these features are found in mathematical objects, which are abstract and as such are only in the intellect. If the *ratio* of the "good" is not found in the intellect, it follows from the convertibility of "good" and "being" that the *ratio* of "being" is not there either and that consequently understanding is not some being (*esse*).[117]

Eckhart advances the same "heterogeneity" argument in his first Parisian question, but now includes the notion of the "true" (*verum*). Understanding (*intelligere*) and whatever pertains to the intellect belong to a different order (*alterius condicionis*) than being itself (*ipsum esse*). In support of this claim he cites the same two statements from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* that he quotes in his account of the transcendentals

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[116] Meister Eckhart, *Quaestiones Parisienses*, I, n. 4 (LW V, p. 41).

[117] *Ibid.*, II, n. 8 (p. 53): "Item: ens et bonum convertuntur. Sed in intellectu non invenitur ratio boni nec efficientis nec finis, ut patet III Metaphysicae. Ut enim ibi dicitur, in mathematicis, quae sunt abstracta, nullum horum invenitur, quia ut sic solum sunt in intellectu. Quare in intellectu non invenitur ratio entis, et sic intelligere non est esse aliquod, ut nominat actionem".

and the Trinity: "good and evil are in things, truth and falsity are in the mind" (book VI), and "there is no good in mathematical objects" (book III). From this it follows that the "true", which is in the mind, and whatever pertains to the intellect as such is not a "being" (*ens*).[118] "Being" and "good" belong to the domain of the natural things, in which finality reigns, whereas the "true" pertains to the domain of the intellectual things, which are superior to the things *extra*. From this perspective one must say that in God there is no "being".

Yet at the end of the first Parisian Question, Eckhart leaves room for another semantics and another understanding of "being". "Being", he recognizes, does not befit God unless in the sense of the "purity of being" (*puritas essendi*).[119] In the *Opus tripartitum*, he identifies *esse* with God, but what does not change is the hierarchical order of the transcendentals "true" and "good". A constant element in Eckhart's thought remains the devaluation of *bonum*.[120]

The order of the transcendentals and soul's ascent to God

God alone is properly "being", "one", "true" and "good", but the effect of Eckhart's account of the order of the transcendentals becomes visible in his description of the ascent of the soul to God in several German sermons. They confirm the devaluation of the good and the dissociation of the good and the true.[121]

The will or love that seeks God remains outside and clings to goodness. The will takes God as he is good; it takes God with a garment on. Goodness is a garment that covers God's being. The person who is to dwell in God or seeks his countenance should not take God as he is good. "Therefore, strip everything from God that clothes him and

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[118] *Ibid.*, I, n. 7 (p. 43): "(…) ipsum intelligere et ea quae ad intellectum pertinent, sunt alterius condicionis quam ipsum esse. Dicitur enim III Metaphysicae quod in mathematicis non est finis nec bonum, et ideo per consequens nec ens, quia ens et bonum idem. Dicitur etiam VI Metaphysicae: bonum et malum sunt in rebus, et verum et falsum in anima. Unde ibi dicitur quod verum, quod est in anima, non est ens (…)".

[119] *Ibid.*, n. 9 (p. 45).

[120] It is one of the main conclusions in the study of W. Goris, *Einheit als Prinzip und Ziel*, pp. 379–381: "The tension in the concept of the good".

[121] The following is mainly based on the *Predigt* 7 (DW I, pp. 23–24), 9 (DW I, p. 152), 23 (DW I, pp. 400–402), 40 (DW II, p. 274) and 59 (DW II, pp. 635–636). Cf. Th. Kobusch, "Transzendenz und Transzendentalien", in: *Meister-Eckhart Jahrbuch* 5 (2011) [forthcoming].

take him bare in the dressing room where he is uncovered and naked in himself".[122]

The intellect is nobler than the will. It "takes God in the root, from whence the Son comes forth"—a reference to the trinitarian background of Eckhart's exposition. But the intellect takes God "under the garment of truth". Truth is also a garment that covers God and must be transcended by the soul.[123] "The masters" next take God as "one", but Eckhart objects to this conception that "one" also adds something. In what is one all that is other is taken off, but by the negation it is again added in order to be other.[124]

Eckhart wonders "if God is neither goodness nor being nor truth nor one, what is he then?" He concludes that God "is rather nothing, he is neither this nor that".[125] God is above everything we can conceive or put into words. He even transcends the transcendental notions.

8.2.4 *The German Eckhart: The transcendentals in* The Book of Divine Consolation

Eckhart is the first major medieval thinker to present his thought not only in Latin, but also in the German vernacular. His most noted German treatise is *The Book of Divine Consolation* (*Daz Buoch der Götlîchen Troestunge*), probably written about 1315.[126] The work shows that the doctrine of the transcendentals is not exclusively found in the Latin writings and clearly demonstrates that the suggestion of a fundamental opposition between a Latin "scholastic" Eckhart and a German

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[122] Meister Eckhart, *Predigt* 40 (DW II, p. 274).

[123] Cf. Meister Eckhart, *Sermo* 24/2, n. 247 (LW IV, p. 226): "Transcendere igitur oportet non solum imaginabilia, sed etiam intelligibilia. (…) Praeterea intellectus accipit deum sub veste veritatis, et ideo oportet ascendere".

[124] Meister Eckhart, *Predigt* 23 (DW I, pp. 400–401).

[125] *Ibid.* (p. 402).

[126] The text of the treatise is to be found in DW V, pp. 3–61; transl. in modern German, pp. 471–497. Engl. transl. in J. M. Clark / J. V. Skinner, *Meister Eckhart, Selected Treatises and Sermons*, London 1958, pp. 109–148. On the treatise, cf. A. M. Haas, "Transzendenzerfahrung nach dem 'Buch der göttlichen Tröstung'", in: *Sermo mysticus: Studien zur Theologie und Sprache der deutschen Mystik*, Freiburg (Schwitzerl.) 1979 (Dokimion, 4), pp. 186–208. K. Ruh, *Meister Eckhart: Theologe, Prediger, Mystiker*, Munich ²1989, pp. 115–135. W. Wackernagel, *Ymagine denudari: Ethique de l'image et métaphysique de l'abstraction chez Maître Eckhart*, Paris 1991 (Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale, 68), pp. 15–93.

"mystical" Eckhart is false. His teachings in *The Book* presuppose the metaphysics of the transcendentals in the *Opus tripartitum*.

The first and most important part of the treatise consists in an analysis of the transcendental perfections. Eckhart wants to determine how "the wise and wisdom, the true (man) and truth, the just and justice, the good and goodness refer to each other and are related to each other". The question displays the peculiar features of his doctrine of the transcendentals—the inclusion of the "spiritual perfections", such as wisdom and justice, and the doubling of the general terms in *abstracta* and *concreta*—and aims at the clarification of the unity between God and man.

Eckhart explains the relationship between the abstract perfections and their concrete subjects by the example of "goodness" and "good": "Goodness is neither created nor made nor born, but it bears and brings forth the good (man); and the good, insofar as he is good, is not made and uncreated, and yet is born child and the son of goodness".[127] He emphasizes the dynamic unity of the concrete "good" and the abstract "goodness", even though they have a different relation of origin: "The good and goodness are but one single goodness, entirely one in everything, apart from the one bearing and the other being born (…). All that belongs to the good (man) he receives from goodness and in goodness. There he is and lives and dwells".

Eckhart next applies this example to the other general perfections. What has been said of the relation between the good and goodness is "equally true of the truthful (man) and truth, of the just and justice, of the wise and wisdom". He also extends the generalization to the divine—an addition that illustrates his identification of the transcendental notions with God and confirms the importance of the Incarnation model for his understanding of the relationship between the concrete and the abstract. It is equally true "of the Son of God and God the Father, of everything that is born of God and that has no father on earth, everything in which nothing that is created is born, nor anything that is not God". The reflection on the transcendental perfections prepares for Eckhart's doctrine of the birth of the Son in man, a doctrine that is intimated, he suggests, by the text in the Gospel of John (1,12–13): "To all those is given the power to become sons of

[127] Meister Eckhart, *Liber "Benedictus"*, I: *Daz Buoch der Götlîchen Troestunge* (DW V, p. 9, ll. 4–9).

God who were born, not of the blood or the will of the flesh or the will of man, but of God and from God alone".[128]

By "the will of man", in Eckhart's reading, the highest powers of the soul are meant—the immaterial faculties of intellect and will. Yet, since they themselves are not God but created in the soul and with the soul, they must be stripped (*entbildet*) of themselves and transformed above themselves (*überbildet*) into God alone, and be born in God and from God, so that God alone may be their father. The birth of God in man requires detachment and an ethics of the transcendental perfections. "A man so fashioned, God's son, being good and the son of goodness, being just and the son of justice, (…) shares that one same being which justice has and is, and he enters into all the properties of justice and truth".[129]

The conclusion of Eckhart's consideration confirms the role he attributes to natural reason in his Latin work. "From this instruction, which is written in the holy Gospels and recognized in the natural light of the rational soul, man finds true comfort in all his sufferings".[130] The "rationalism" of *The Book of Divine Consolation* endorses the view that the metaphysics of the transcendentals is the philosophical foundation of Eckhart's entire project.

8.2.5 *Analogy or Univocity?*

Eckhart was a controversial thinker in his own time and remains so today. He had a brilliant academic career (the "Meister") and held important positions within the Dominican Order, but at the end of his life inquisitorial proceedings against him were begun. There is evidence that a list of extracts from the German treatise *The Book of Divine Consolation* was the starting point of these proceedings. One of the incriminated passages was the statement that "the good (man), insofar as he is good, is not made and is uncreated, and yet the son of goodness".[131] The process ended with the papal bull "*In agro dominico*" of March 27, 1329—one year after Eckhart's death—,

[128] *Ibid.* (p. 9, ll. 12–10, l. 20).
[129] *Ibid.* (p. 11, ll. 5–19).
[130] *Ibid.* (p. 11, ll. 20–22).
[131] Cf. *Articuli extracti de libro 'Benedictus, Processus contra Echardum*, I, nn. 1–9 (LW V, pp. 198–202); *Responsio Echardi*, I, nn. 87–92 (LW V, pp. 280–281).

in which twenty-eight propositions taken from his work were officially condemned; several of them concern his teaching of the birth of the Son in the human soul.[132]

Eckhart's thought has also been the subject of passionate disputes in modern scholarship. The main controversy concerns the question how he understood the unity and relation between divine being and created being. Two divergent models have been presented for the interpretation of his views: "analogy" and "univocity". These doctrines do not necessarily exclude one another; in the thirteenth century, the doctrine of the analogy of "being" was related to what is transcendental, whereas the univocity of the genera and species applies to the categorial order of natural causality (of which Aristotle's maxim "man generates man" is exemplary). What is special in the case of Eckhart is that both analogy and univocity have been put forward as his adequate model for understanding the relation between God and creature.

1. The principal representative of the analogy model is a study by the German medievalist Josef Koch. He regards the doctrine of analogy as "the core of Eckhart's thought" and as essential for his doctrine of the transcendentals.[133] Although the Meister suggests that his teaching on analogy continues Thomas Aquinas's account, his position in fact is, as Koch rightly observes, quite different from Aquinas's. The divergence is not surprising in view of their diverse perspectives of transcendentality. Analogy in Aquinas asks whether and in what sense transcendental properties that are found in creatures can be said of God; for Eckhart the question rather is to what extent these perfections, which are God's *propria*, can be said of finite things.

A key text for Eckhart's conception of analogy is to be found in his Commentary on Ecclesiasticus 24,29: "They that eat me, shall yet hunger". His ninth exposition of this verse appeals to the doctrine of analogy. It starts with the well-known triadic scheme, which expresses the medieval transformation of the triple division presented by Aris-

[132] For the text of the papal bull, cf. LW V, pp. 596–600.

[133] J. Koch, "Zur Analogielehre Meister Eckharts", in: *Melanges offerts à Etienne Gilson*, Paris – Toronto 1960 (Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale. Hors série), pp. 327–350 [reprinted in: id., *Kleine Schriften*, Vol. I, pp. 367–397]. Another important study on analogy in Eckhart is A. de Libera, *Le problème de l'être chez Maître Eckhart: Logique et métaphysique de l'analogie*, Genève – Lausanne – Neufchâtel 1980 (Cahiers de la Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie, 4).

totle at the beginning of the *Categories*: "These three are distinguished: the *univocum, aequivocum, analogum*". Without indicating his source, Eckhart follows a rather unusual text of Aquinas, taken from his reply to an objection in his commentary on the *Sentences*.

THOMAS AQUINAS	MEISTER ECKHART
"(…) aliter dividitur aequivocum, analogum et univocum. Aequivocum enim dividitur secundum res significatas, univocum vero dividitur secundum diversas differentias, sed analogum dividitur secundum diversos modos".	"(…) distinguuntur haec tria: univocum, aequivocum et analogum. Nam aequivoca dividuntur per diversas res significatas, univoca vero per diversas rei differentias, analoga vero non distinguuntur per res, sed nec per rerum differentias, sed per modos unius eiusdemque rei simpliciter".[134]

One might wonder why Eckhart refers to this passage and not to Aquinas's more pertinent accounts of analogy in his two *Summae*. The reason could be a peculiarity of the text cited: it is not concerned with the proper differences between "univocals", "equivocals" and "analogous" terms, but with the different kinds of division within these three types. *Aequivoca*, which have only the name in common, are divided according to the diverse things they signify; *univoca*, which have a common essence, are divided according to the various differences of the same thing; *analoga* are not distinguished according to things, or through the differences of things, but "according to the modes (*modi*) of one and the same thing". Here Eckhart modifies Aquinas's text. The latter does not specify the "modes", but from the context it is obvious that he means the "modes of predication", according to which "being" is divided. Eckhart understands "modes" as those of "one and the same thing (*res*)". What does he mean by that?

Eckhart uses the traditional example of analogical predication, "health", for a clarification of his intention. He gives to the Aristotelian example a singular twist by making three statements. (i) The one and the same health that is in an animal is that, and no other, which is in the diet and in the urine of that animal. (ii) Health is in the diet and the urine in such a way that nothing of the health as health is in

[134] Meister Eckhart, *In Ecclesiasticum*, n. 52 (LW II, p. 280). Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 22, q. 1, a. 3 ad 2.

them—no more than it is in a stone (that does not have any relation to health). (iii) But the urine is said to be "healthy" only because it signifies that one health, which is in the animal.[135]

The notion of "analogy" implies both unity and difference, but the way Eckhart illustrates these features by the example of health seems to be contradictory. The one and the same health that is in an animal is in the urine and is not in the urine. What, however, deserves attention is the reduplication terminology in the second, negative statement. Health *as health*, that is, formally considered, is only in the animal; it is in the urine, and not in the stone, because the urine is a "sign" of health. In Eckhart's understanding of analogy the *res* as such is only in the first analogate, not in the other.

The Meister next applies the idea of "analogy" to the order between God and creature in "being" and the other transcendentals, including the spiritual perfections. "Being" (*ens sive esse*) and every general perfection, like "one", "true", "good", "light" and "justice", are said of God and creatures in an analogical way (*analogice*). From this it follows that creatures have these perfections totally from something outside (*ab aliquo extra*) to which they are analogically related (*analogantur*), namely, God.[136]

Consequently, the transcendental perfections "being", "truth" and "goodness" are not positively rooted (*radicatum*) in the creatures themselves, for what is analogically ordered to another does not have anything of the analogous form fixed in itself. The Ecclesiasticus text "They that eat me, shall yet hunger" is therefore, Eckhart concludes, perfectly fitted to signify "the truth of the analogy (*veritas analogiae*) of all things to God". They "eat", because they are (are true, are good, etc.), they yet "hunger", because they are from another and not from themselves.[137] In contrast to Aquinas, who teaches that "being" and

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[135] Meister Eckhart, *In Ecclesiasticum*, n. 52 (LW II, p. 280): "Verbi gratia: sanitas una eademque, quae est in animali, ipsa est, non alia, in diaeta et urina, ita quod sanitatis, ut sanitas, nihil prorsus est in diaeta et urina, non plus quam in lapide, sed hoc solo dicitur urina sana, quia significat illam sanitatem eandem numero quae est in animali".

[136] *Ibid.* (p. 281): "Ens autem sive esse et omnis perfectio, maxime generalis, puta esse, unum, verum, bonum, lux, iustitia et huiusmodi, dicuntur de deo et creaturis analogice. Ex quo sequitur quod bonitas et iustitia et similia bonitatem suam habent totaliter ab aliquo extra, ad quod analogantur, deus scilicet".

[137] *Ibid.*, n. 53 (p. 282).

the other transcendentals formally "inhere" in creatures, the Meister denies any ontological autonomy to them.[138]

Eckhart understands the unity and difference that are typical of an analogical relation in "being", etc. as the different "modes" of "one and the same thing". "Being" and the general perfections are as such only in God; "to be", for a creature, is to "receive" being, and this reception is a permanent process, a continuous influx. The "mode" of being proper to a creature is that being is "lent" to it.[139]

2. Burkhard Mojsisch's study on analogy and univocity in Eckhart (1983) was a challenge to the common opinion. He does not deny that there is a doctrine of analogy in Eckhart, but strongly relativizes its importance. Not this doctrine, but "the theory of univocity has a key function in Eckhart's thought", for only this theory can explain that man is more than a creature. The doctrine of analogy is concerned with the relation between God and creature; it is intended to emphasize their distance and to mark the deficiency and "nothingness" of the creature, considered in itself. Constitutive for univocity, on the other hand, are the correlationality and equality of the terms of the relation. The theorem of univocal causality is applied to the relations within the divine between Father and Son. Hence this theorem can render man's special relation to God intelligible: the model of univocity is concerned with the doctrine of the birth of God in the human soul.[140]

It is evident that the univocity attributed to Eckhart has quite a different meaning from the turn to univocity in his contemporary Duns Scotus. The Meister does not argue a univocal concept of being for epistemological reasons; he is not motivated by questions as to the possibility of a general science of being or the possibility of natural knowledge of God. His concern is the real unity of God and man. To that end Eckhart would have applied the idea of univocity, which theologians had employed for the trinitarian relations *within* the divine, to the relation between God and man. There is no specific text comparable to his key text on analogy, in which Eckhart

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[138] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 4 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXII/3, Rome 1976, p. 602): "(…) omnia sunt bona creata bonitate formaliter sicut forma inhaerente, bonitate vero increata sicut forma exemplari".

[139] Meister Eckhart, *In Sapientiam*, n. 292 (LW II, p. 627).

[140] B. Mojsisch, *Meister Eckhart. Analogie, Univozität und Einheit*, Hamburg 1983, pp. 42–81.

explicitly states their univocal community, but according to Mojsisch the frequently discussed relation of *iustitia* and *iustus* is Eckhart's paradigm of univocity.[141] His statements in the *Book of Divine Consolation* about the relation between "goodness" and "the good" ("uncreated, yet the son of goodness") can only be understood in the light of univocal causality.

Mojsisch's book had a considerable impact on the study of Eckhart, but his conclusions did not remain unchallenged. From a philosophical point of view three objections can be raised against the claim that the theory of univocity has a key function in Eckhart's thought and that the Meister understands the relation God–man according to this model, and not to that of analogy.

(i) Mojsisch's view is based on a one-sided interpretation of Eckhart's doctrine of analogy. All emphasis is placed on the moment of difference between the analogates: the mark of the creature is its "nothingness". In this way "analogy" in Eckhart can hardly be distinguished from "equivocity".[142] But the thirteenth-century "invention" of analogy was meant to find an intermediary position between univocity and equivocity, and to look for a form of unity in the diversity. The medieval doctrines of analogy vary, since they variously determine the relation between the two simultaneous moments of unity and difference. In Eckhart's conception, unity is also a constitutive element: the *analoga* are distinguished according to the modes "of one and the same thing (*res*)". It is interesting to note that one of the incriminated articles brought up in the process against Eckhart is an excerpt from his central text on analogy in his commentary on Ecclesiasticus, to which his opponents add an example. This addition illustrates the analogical predication of "the good" of God and creature and underlines the moment of unity in Eckhart's conception: "Goodness itself (*ipsa bonitas*), which is in God and which is God, is that by which all good (men) (*omnes boni*) are good".[143]

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[141] General text on the relation between *principium* and *principiatum*: *In Iohannem*, nn. 4–13 (LW III, pp. 5–12); the paradigm: *ibid.*, nn. 14–22 (pp. 13–19). Cf. B. Mojsisch, *Meister Eckhart. Analogie, Univozität und Einheit*, pp. 61–70.

[142] This is in fact the interpretation of R. Schönberger, *Die Transformation des klassischen Seinsverständnisses. Studien zur Vorgeschichte des neuzeitlichen Seinsbegriffs im Mittelalter*, Berlin – New York 1986 (Quellen und Studien zur Philosophie, 21), pp. 175–177.

[143] *Processus contra Echardum*, I, n. 29 (LW V, p. 210).

(ii) Crucial in Mojsisch's interpretation is the opposition he supposes between the transcendentals and the spiritual perfections. The theory of the transcendentals, he claims, is the basis of the doctrine of analogy, the theory of the spiritual perfections the basis of the doctrine of univocity.[144] But the idea of such an opposition with the corresponding distribution of analogy and univocity is foreign to Eckhart's metaphysics of the transcendentals. In the key text we analyzed, he applies the model of analogy not only to "being", "one", "true" and "good", but also to "light" and "justice". In his account of the relation between an abstract notion and its concrete counterpart, he argues that justice is analogically related to those who are just. Eckhart adds that this generally obtains for all spiritual, divine things: *quid generale omnibus spiritualibus, divinis*.[145]

(iii) A final objection to the univocity model is the central place of the doctrine of analogy in the *Responsio*, Eckhart's response to the incriminated articles presented to him.[146] The critical edition of this text by Loris Sturlese has established the authenticity of this writing. It is Eckhart's last work, in which he consistently defends his positions. The central place of the doctrine of analogy in the *Responsio* cannot thus be accounted for by strategic reasons, for instance, the intention to play down the radicalism of the univocity theorem.

At the beginning of the *Responsio*, Eckhart makes a few *notanda*, which he apparently sees as fundamental for his entire defence. The first remark points to the importance of the phrase *inquantum*, which means "reduplication" (*reduplicatio*). "The phrase 'insofar as', that is, a reduplication, excludes from the term in question everything that is other or foreign to it". In the preceding sections, we have already met the reduplication formula several times; the phrase *inquantum* turns out to be the "hermeneutical key word" in Eckhart's analysis of the transcendentals and the spiritual perfections.[147] The reduplication of the concrete general term ("being as being") implies a purification,

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[144] Cf. the summary of his view in B. Mojsisch, "*Perfectiones spirituales*", pp. 518–519.

[145] Meister Eckhart, *In Sapientiam*, n. 44 (LW II, pp. 366–367).

[146] For this aspect, cf. A. Schiffhauer, "*Nos filii Dei sumus analogice,* Die Analogielehre Meister Eckharts in der Verteidigungsschrift", in: A. Speer / L. Wegener (eds.), *Meister Eckhart in Erfurt*, pp. 356–389.

[147] *Responsio Echardi*, I, n. 81 (LW V, p. 277). The designation "hermeneutical key word" for *inquantum* was suggested by K. Ruh, *Meister Eckhart: Theologe, Prediger, Mystiker*, p. 86.

and requires an "ethics of the transcendentals", in which the concrete subject detaches itself from any particularity ("this or that being"). Because the reduplication excludes everything that is foreign to the perfection, it brings about the identity of the concrete with the abstract form—*iustus, inquantum iustus, est ipsa iustitia*—so that the concrete appears under a divine perspective. That is the sense of Eckhart's controversial statement in *The Book of Divine Consolation*, "the good (man), *insofar as* he is good, is uncreated".

The reduplication formula signifies unity, not, however, necessarily univocity. That appears from the second *notandum* in the *Responsio*: "The second remark is that the good [man] (*bonus*) and goodness are one. The good, insofar as he is good, signifies goodness alone". But Eckhart next introduces a distinction between the unity in the trinitarian God and the unity in the relation God-man. In the divine the unity of good and goodness is univocal, in God and the creatures analogical.[148] In the *Responsio*, he applies the same distinction *univoce-analogice* to the unity of the spiritual perfection "justice" and "just", and even to the unity of the Son of God. As all good men are analogically good by one and the same goodness, just men are analogically sons of God by the one Son of God.[149] It is Eckhart's final word.

Concluding observations

Meister Eckhart develops a new model of transcendentality, which is marked by the intertwinement of transcendentality and transcendence. Whereas for Aquinas the notion of *ens commune* refers to finite being, commonness for Eckhart is a property of God. Inspired by Henry of Ghent's theological transformation of the doctrine, Eckhart identifies

[148] *Responsio Echardi*, I, n. 82 (LW V, p. 278): "Secundum est quod bonus et bonitas sunt unum. Bonus enim in quantum bonus solam bonitatem significat, sicut album solam qualitatem, albedinem scilicet, significat. Haec tamen, bonus et bonitas, sunt in filio, spiritu sancto et patre unum univoce, in deo autem et nobis, qui boni sumus, sunt analogice unum".

[149] *Ibid.*, n. 114 (LW V, p. 288): "In divinis quidem univoce, in creaturis autem et deo analogice se habe[n]t. Est ergo eadem iustitia sive bonitas simpliciter et absolute in divinis, in creaturis autem analogice". Cf. *ibid.*, II, n. 143 (p. 352): "Nec putandum est quod alio et alio filio dei iusti quique sunt filii dei, sed sicut omnes boni ab una et eadem bonitate analogice boni sunt, et sicut unus est deus in omnibus per essentiam, sic unus est filius deus in omnibus filiis adoptionis et illi per ipsum et in ipso sunt filii analogice".

the transcendentals with God: God alone is properly "being", "one", "true" and "good". He is common (*communis*) in distinction to what is proper (*proprium*) and finite, the marks of the creature. A feature of Eckhart's metaphysics of the transcendentals is that it implies an "ethics of the transcendentals", a process of detachment from what is particular in the creature. Between God and creature there is an analogical unity, which ensures that the commonness of the transcendental perfections also includes the creatures.

As a Scholastic author, the Latin Eckhart remained isolated; "the metaphysics of the transcendentals" in his project of the *Opus tripartitum* was not adopted by his followers. Only Nicholas of Cusa showed interest in it and in the year 1444 ordered the composition of a large collection of texts (the Codex Kues 21), which became the basis for the modern edition of Eckhart's Latin works.[150]

[150] Cf. J. Koch, "Meister Eckharts Weiterwirken im deutsch-niederländischen Raum im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert", in: *La Mystique Rhénane. Colloque de Strasbourg, 16–19 mai 1961,* Paris 1963, pp. 133–156 [reprinted in: id., *Kleine Schriften*, Vol. I, pp. 429–455].

CHAPTER NINE

DUNS SCOTUS: A TURN IN THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRANSCENDENTALS

9.1 Tradition and innovation: "*Scientia transcendens*"

The views of the Franciscan thinker John Duns Scotus (ca. 1266–1308) transformed the medieval perspective of transcendentality. He introduced a significant expression, which would make career in the history of philosophy and to whose introduction modern scholarship has attached programmatic importance. In the prologue of his *Questions on the Metaphysics*, Scotus designates metaphysics as the "transcendental science" (*scientia transcendens*). In the most comprehensive systematic reconstruction of his metaphysics by Ludger Honnefelder, the phrase *scientia transcendens* is regarded as characteristic of Scotus's conception and as expression of the originality of his metaphysical project, insofar as he made "the step to Transcendental Philosophy" by conceiving metaphysics in its entirety as the science of transcendental being. Consequently, the discontinuity between Scotus's view and that of the thirteenth century has strongly been emphasized: "With respect to the relationship between metaphysics and the doctrine of the transcendentals Scotus' ideas represent (…) a crucial break". In his understanding, First Philosophy cannot be the science of the first being but only of the *first known*, the concept of being; it is not onto-theology, as it had been for the commentators belonging to the first generation after the reception of Aristotle, like Albert the Great and Aquinas, but "pure" ontology.[1]

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[1] L. Honnefelder, *Ens inquantum ens. Der Begriff des Seienden als solchen als Gegenstand der Metaphysik nach der Lehre des Johannes Duns Scotus*, Münster ²1989 [1st ed. 1979 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. Neue Folge, 16)], pp. 396–405. Cf. id. "Der Schritt der Philosophie zur *scientia* transcendens", in: W. Kluxen (ed.), *Thomas von Aquin im philosophischen Gespräch*, Freiburg-München 1975, pp. 229–244. Scotus's phrase is also the title of Honnefelder's monumental study of the connection between medieval and modern metaphysics: *Scientia transcendens. Die formale Bestimmung der Seiendheit in der Metaphysik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit (Duns Scotus—Suárez—Wolff—Kant—Peirce)*, Hamburg 1990. A good English summary of his interpretation can be found in L. Honnefelder,

The originality of Scotus's project is indisputable, but there is no need to demonstrate the innovative character of his thought by opposing its ontological orientation to the onto-theological tradition. The discussions about the "proper subject" of metaphysics in the previous chapters have shown that the onto-theological structure of this science in Albertus Magnus and Aquinas does not mean that First Philosophy is the science of the first being. Nor is Duns Scotus the first to relate metaphysics with the first known; Henry of Ghent, for instance, identifies the subject of First Philosophy with what is first conceived by the intellect, "being as such" (see ch. 7.2.3). Likewise it is undeniable that the *Doctor subtilis* deeply transformed the current idea of transcendentality, but there is no need to support this claim by marginalizing the importance of the thirteenth-century doctrine of the transcendentals. The duality of tradition and innovation is reflected in the present section: we shall first (9.1.1) focus on the phrase *scientia transcendens* and show that its meaning and the context in which it appears are traditional rather than innovative.[2] Next (9.1.2) we examine Scotus's account of the "subject" of metaphysics in the first question of his commentary, in which he elaborates in a new way the onto-theological unity of what he calls the *metaphysica transcendens*.

9.1.1 "Scientia transcendens": *A "programmatic" phrase?*

1. The expression "*scientia transcendens*" appears at the beginning of Scotus's *Questions on the Metaphysics*. In the prologue to the first book, he argues that what is most knowable "in the first way" (*primo modo*) is that which is most common (*communissima*), such as being qua being (*ens in quantum* ens) and that which is consequent upon

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"Metaphysics as a Discipline: From the 'Transcendental Philosophy of the Ancients' to Kant's Notion of Transcendental Philosophy", in: R. L. Friedman / L. O. Nielsen (eds.), *The Medieval Heritage in Early Modern Metaphysics and Modal Theory, 1400–1700*, Dordrecht-Boston-London 2003 (New synthese historical library, 53), pp. 53–74, in particular p. 59: "(…) Scotus' ideas (…) represent a crucial break". Cf. also R. H. Pich (ed.), *New essays on Metaphysics as 'Scientia transcendens'*, Louvain-la-Neuve 2007 (Textes et Etudes du Moyen Age, 43).

[2] Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Metaphysics as a Transcendental Science", in: C. Esposito / P. Porro (eds.), *Metaphysica, sapientia, scientia divina. Soggetto e statuto della filosofia prima nel Medioevo. Atti del Convegno della Società Italiana per lo Studio del Pensiero Medievale, Bari, 9–12 giugno 2004*, Turnhout 2005 (Quaestio, 5), pp. 377–390.

being as such. He illustrates the commonness of these notions by two references to Avicenna's doctrine of the primary conceptions of the intellect ("being", "thing", and "one") and makes clear that the consideration of these *communissima* belongs to the domain of metaphysics by quoting Aristotle's "ontological" description of First Philosophy in book IV of his *Metaphysics*.[3] The argument thus appeals to the main authoritative texts for the thirteenth-century formation of the doctrine of the transcendentals.

Scotus goes on to make an additional remark about the need for this science. Because that which is most common is that which is first known, it cannot be treated in any particular science; its knowledge is the very condition of the possibility of such a science. In his conclusion he introduces the term 'transcendentals' as another name for the *communissima*: "Therefore, it is necessary that some universal science exists that considers these *transcendentia* as such".[4] On the basis of this conclusion Scotus presents a (quasi-etymological) explanation of the name 'metaphysics': "It is from '*meta*', which means '*trans*', and '*ycos*', which means '*scientia*'. It is, as it were, the 'transcending science' (*scientia transcendens*), because it is concerned with the *transcendentia*".[5]

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[3] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, I, prol., n. 17 (ed. The Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera philosophica* [= OP], Vol. III, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997, p. 8): "maxime scibilia primo modo sunt communissima, ut ens in quantum ens, et quaecumque consequuntur ens in quantum ens. Dicit enim Avicenna I *Metapysicae* cap. 5 quod 'ens et res imprimuntur in anima prima impressione, quae non acquiritur ex aliis notioribus se'. Et infra: 'quae priora sunt ad imaginandum per se ipsa sunt ea quae communia sunt omnibus, sicut res et ens et unum. Et ideo non potest manifestari aliquod horum per probationem, quae non sit circularis'. Haec autem communissima pertinent ad considerationem metaphysicae secundum Philosophum in IV huius in principio: 'Est scientia quaedam quae speculatur ens in quantum ens, et quae huic insunt secundum se' etc.". Engl. transl. by G. J. Etzkorn / A. B. Wolter, *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle by John Duns Scotus*, Vol. I, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997.

[4] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, I, prol., n. 18 (OP III, pp. 8–9): "Cuius necessitas ostendi potest sic: ex quo communissima primo intelliguntur—ut probatum est per Avicennam—, sequitur quod aliora specialioria non possunt cognosci nisi illa communia prius cognoscantur. Et non potest istorum communium cognitio tradi in aliqua scientia particulari,—quia qua ratione in una, eadem ratione in alia (…), et ita idem multotiens inutiliter repeteretur—, igitur necesse est esse aliquam scientiam universalem, quae per se consideret illa transcendentia".

[5] *Ibid.* (p. 9): "Et hanc scientiam vocamus metaphysicam, quae dicitur a 'meta', quod est 'trans', et 'ycos' 'scientia', quasi transcendens scientia, quia est de transcendentibus".

The terminology is remarkable, but does not have a programmatic or polemical sense. On the contrary, Scotus's argument adopts the common understanding of transcendentals as the *communissima* in the thirteenth century—which is not, as we shall see, fully identical with Scotus's own view, for he does not regard commonness as a necessary condition of a transcendental notion. Another notable aspect is that his understanding of metaphysics as the "transcendental science" only concerns a part of this discipline: it is based on "what is most knowable *primo modo*". Apparently, there is another orientation, a "second way". We therefore have to reread the text in full and consider its general structure and purpose.

Scotus's purpose in the prologue is to show the dignity or nobility of this science on the basis of Aristotle's famous opening sentence of the *Metaphysics* (980a 21): "All men by nature desire to know". The syllogistic argument is as follows:

- (Major:) If all men by nature desire to know, then they desire most of all the greatest knowledge or science. As the Philosopher indicates, the greatest science is about those things that are most knowable (*maxime scibilia*).
- (Minor:) Things are said to be most knowable in two ways: either (i) because they are the first of all things known, without which nothing else can be known, or (ii) because they are what is known most certainly. In either way this science is about the most knowable.
- (Conclusion:) This science [metaphysics] is therefore the greatest science and, consequently, most desirable.[6]

Scotus provides proof of both parts of the minor. We have just seen his proof of the first part, which concludes that metaphysics considers the transcendentals. The proof of the second part of the minor reads: That which is most certainly knowable are principles and causes, and

[6] *Ibid.*, n. 16 (pp. 7–8): "Nunc propositio ipsa [*sc.* omnes homines natura scire desiderant] ad propositum est applicanda, videlicet ad ostendendum dignitatem et nobilitatem huius scientiae, sic: si omnes homines natura scire desiderant, ergo maxime scientiam maxime desiderabunt. Ita arguit Philosophus I huius cap 2. Et ibidem subdit: 'quae sit maxime scientia, illa scilicet quae est circa maxime scibilia'. Maxime autem dicuntur scibilia dupliciter: vel quia primo omnium sciuntur sine quibus non possunt alia sciri; vel quia sunt certissima cognoscibilia. Utroque autem modo considerat ista scientia maxime scibilia. Haec igitur est maxime scientia, et per consequens maxime desiderabilis".

the more they are prior the more certainly they are known. For on these all the certainty of what is posterior depends. But this science considers such principles and causes—Scotus refers to the first book of the *Metaphysics*, in which Aristotle states that First Philosophy is "wisdom", dealing with the highest causes.[7]

The core of Scotus's argument in the prologue is the twofold orientation of metaphysics. This science considers what is first known, namely, the *communissima* or transcendentals, as well as what is ontologically prior, the first causes. His explanation of metaphysics as "transcendental science" does not concern the whole of this science, but only one of its objects. The distinction between the domain of the transcendentals and first causes reminds us of Aquinas's conception of the transcendentals. Scotus's prologue has a traditional character, a fact that has been so far insufficiently recognized in modern scholarship.

2. The traditional character of the prologue also emerges from a comparison with Aquinas's prologue to his commentary on the *Metaphysics* (see ch. 6.2).[8] Scotus's prologue furnishes evidence that he was familiar with Thomas's commentary, for he cites *verbatim* Aquinas's arguments for Aristotle's claim that "all men by nature desire to know".[9] Comparing the two prologues with one another, we are able to notice a number of striking similarities:

(i) Scotus wants to show that the most desirable and greatest science is about those things that are "most knowable" (*maxime scibilia*). His purpose is similar to Aquinas's, who reasons that there must be a first and highest science and then defines its distinctive feature: the first and highest science treats of the "most intelligible" (*maxime intelligibilia*).

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[7] *Ibid.*, n. 21 (p. 10): "Secunda pars minoris probatur sic: certissima cognoscibilia sunt principia et causae, et tanto secundum se certiora quanto priora. Ex illis enim dependet tota certitudo posteriorum. Haec autem scientia considerat huiusmodi principia et causas, sicut probat Philosophus, I huius cap. 2, per hoc quod ipsa est sapientia".

[8] Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, prol. (ed. M.-R. Cathala, Turin-Rome 1950, pp. 1–2).

[9] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, I, prol., nn. 5–7 (OP III, pp. 4–5). Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaphysicorum*, I, lect. 1, nn. 2–4 (ed. Cathala / Spiazzi, p. 6).

(ii) According to both thinkers what is "most knowable" or "most intelligible" can be understood in several ways. Scotus's first mode, that which is most common, corresponds to the second meaning of "the most intelligible" in Aquinas, which is related to universality. "These are being (*ens*) and that which is consequent upon being (…)". In this way Thomas connects the science of metaphysics with the doctrine of the transcendentals.

Scotus	Aquinas
Maxime scibilia primo modo sunt communissima, ut ens in quantum ens, et quaecumque consequuntur ens in quantum ens.	Unde et illa scientia maxime est intellectualis, quae circa principia maxime universalia versatur. Quae quidem sunt ens, et ea quae consequuntur ens.

(iii) Scotus's second mode of "most knowable", the first causes, corresponds to the first meaning of the "most intelligible" in Aquinas, related to causality. Therefore, the science, which considers the first causes, is the highest. Unlike Scotus, Aquinas distinguishes a third type of the "most intelligible", namely things which are altogether free from matter, such as God and the intelligences, but this difference is not essential, because the first causes are identified as God and the separate substances.

Scotus	Aquinas
Maxime scibilia sunt certissima cognoscibilia (…). Certissima cognoscibilia sunt principia et causae, et tanto secundum se certiora quanto priora. (…) Haec autem scientia considerat huiusmodi principia et causas.	Unde, cum certitudo scientiae per intellectum acquiratur ex causis, causarum cognitio maxime intellectualis videtur. Unde et illa scientia, quae primas causas considerat (…).

(iv) After his account of what is most intelligible in the sense of what is most common Scotus adds, as Aquinas does, a remark that emphasizes the need for this transcendental science. The considerations are the same in both thinkers: Principles of this kind should not be treated in any one particular science, but should be studied in some universal science.

Scotus	Aquinas
Cuius necessitas ostendi potest sic: ex quo communissima primo intelliguntur (…), sequitur quod aliora specialioria non possunt cognosci nisi illa communia prius cognoscantur. Et non potest istorum communium cognitio tradi in aliqua scientia particulari (…), igitur necesse est esse aliquam scientiam universalem, quae per se consideret illa transcendentia.	Huiusmodi autem non debent omnino indeterminata remanere, cum sine his completa cognitio de his, quae sunt propria alicui generi vel speciei, haberi non possit. Nec iterum in aliqua particulari scientia tractari debent (…). Unde restat quod in una communi scientia huiusmodi tractentur.

(v) At the end of his prologue Aquinas explains the names given to this science on the basis of the three types of "the most intelligible". Like Scotus, he reserves the name 'metaphysics' for the study of the *communia*. This science is called "metaphysics", "insofar as it considers being and what follows upon it, for these *transphysica* are discovered in the process of resolution (*in via resolutionis*) as the more common after the less common".[10]

From our analysis we may conclude that Scotus's account in the prologue of his *Metaphysics* commentary does not express a "crucial break" with tradition. All elements in this text can be traced back to Aquinas's prologue: its purpose, its arguments, the remark about the need for this science and even the explanation of the name 'metaphysics'. Scotus's introduction of the phrase *scientia transcendens* is not essentially different from Aquinas's account of the name, since it continues the thirteenth-century linking of metaphysics with the doctrine of the transcendentals. Albertus Magnus, in his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, maintained that metaphysical knowledge is concerned with the *prima* and *transcendentia*. For Aquinas metaphysics is the *scientia communis*, because it considers *ens commune*.[11]

[10] Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaphysicorum*, prol. (ed. Cathala, p. 2).

[11] Albert the Great, *Metaphysica*, I, tract. 1, c. 2 (ed. B. Geyer, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XVI/1, Münster 1960, p. 5, ll. 12–15). Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaphysicorum*, prol. (ed. Cathala, pp. 1–2): "Unde restat quod in una communi scientia huiusmodi tractentur. (…) ista scientia (…) non tamen considerat quodlibet eorum ut subiectum, sed ipsum solum ens commune".

In one other passage in his work, Scotus again uses the expression *scientia transcendens*, namely, in a critical discussion of Aquinas's view on the adequate object of the human intellect (see 9.4.3). Metaphysics is only possible, Scotus argues, if the intellect conceives something under the aspect of being in general (*ens in communi*). Otherwise metaphysics would not be a *scientia transcendens* to a greater extent than physics. One wonders whether Scotus deliberately employs a phrase that is not foreign to Aquinas's thought in order to emphasize its inconsistency.

9.1.2 "Metaphysica transcendens" *and the question as to the "subject" of metaphysics*

1. In the first question of his *Metaphysics* commentary, Scotus recalls the twofold orientation of this science he had described in the prologue: metaphysics deals with the *transcendentia* and it deals with the highest causes. Which of these objects ought to be considered the "proper" object of metaphysics—the terms "object" and "subject" are used interchangeably in this passage? Scotus observes that there are various opinions about this topic and links the basic question of medieval metaphysics with the controversy between Avicenna and Averroes in Arab philosophy: "Therefore the first question is whether the proper subject of metaphysics is being-as-being, as Avicenna claimed, or God and the intelligences, as Averroes assumed".[12]

Scotus's treatment of this question is one of the most detailed in medieval thought. He first explains Avicenna's ontological conception, discusses arguments pro and con, suggests some specifications and points out its limitations (nn. 13–67); next he proceeds in a similar way with regard to Averroes's position (nn. 68–109). Then his account takes an unexpected turn, for in the final part Scotus discusses the

[12] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, I, q. 1, (OP III, p. 15): "De isto autem obiecto huius scientiae ostensum est prius quod haec scientia est circa transcendentia; ostensum est autem quod est circa altissimas causas. Quod autem istorum debeat poni proprium eius obiectum, variae sunt opiniones. Ideo de hoc quaeritur primo utrum proprium subiectum metapysicae sit ens in quantum ens (sicut posuit Avicenna) vel Deus et Intelligentiae (sicut posuit Commentator Averroes)". On this question, cf. A. Zimmermann, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik? Die Diskussion über den Gegenstand der Metaphysik im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert: Texte und Untersuchungen*, Leuven 1998 (*Recherches* de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales. Bibliotheca, 1), pp. 294–312. L. Honnefelder, *Ens inquantum ens*, pp. 99–112.

question "How can God be the subject of metaphysics?" (nn. 110–163) and seems to endorse a theological understanding of this science.

Giorgio Pini has pointed to "the surprising and at times frustrating character of Scotus's *Questions on the Metaphysics*". The "Subtle Doctor" seems to defend positions quite different from what we would expect and from what he maintains in his theological works. The best example is Scotus's dismissal of univocity in his commentary on book IV (q. 1).[13] Another instance could be his discussion of the proper subject of metaphysics, for in all three versions of his *Sentences* commentary—the *Lectura*, the *Ordinatio* and the *Reportatio Parisiensis*—Scotus's stand on the controversy between Avicenna and Averroes is different from his position in the *Metaphysics* commentary. He adopts the ontological conception and acknowledges that "Avicenna had spoken well, and Averroes very badly": God is not the subject of First Philosophy, but the goal of metaphysics.[14] There is evidence that Scotus composed the *Questions* over a long period of time and probably intended to provide a revised edition of the work. The revision was carried out by his associate Antonius Andreae (d. 1320). One of the modifications concerns *ens* as the subject of metaphysics. The first question in the revised edition, which had immense success, argues that "being" *simpliciter sumptum*, which is common to God and creature, is the first and adequate subject of metaphysics.[15]

2. The most interesting aspect of the first question in Scotus's *Metaphysics* commentary are his *dubitationes* about the view that God is the subject of metaphysics. Of special importance are the first and sixth "doubts", because they suggest the need of "another" metaphysics.

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[13] Cf. G. Pini, "Univocity in Scotus' *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*: The Solution to a Riddle", in: *Medioevo. Rivista di storia della filosofia medievale* 30 (2005), pp. 69–110, in particular p. 70.

[14] Duns Scotus, *Lectura*, prol. p. 2, q. 2, n. 97 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XVI, Vatican 1955, pp. 34–35). *Ordinatio*, prol. p. 3, q. 2, nn. 193–4 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. I, Vatican 1950, pp. 129–131). *Reportata Parisiensia*, IA, prol., q. 3, a. 1 (ed. W. A. Frank / A. B. Wolter, in: *Duns Scotus, Metaphysician*, West Lafayette, Ind., 1995, pp. 18–27, here p. 22): "De primo [*sc*. Si habitus metaphysicae habeat Deum pro primo obiecto suo] est controversia inter Avicennam et Averroem (…). Sed Avicenna bene dicit et Averroes valde male".

[15] Cf. G. Pini, "Sulla fortuna delle '*Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*' di Duns Scoto: le '*Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*' di Antonio Andrea", in: *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 6 (1995), pp. 281–361. With respect to I, q. 1, pp. 299–301 and pp. 353–355.

The first doubt argues that the consideration of being as being seems to be prior to the consideration of being in relation to God. Therefore another metaphysics (*alia metaphysica*), which considers being as being, will be prior than the science having God as subject. In his reply, Scotus recognizes that the consideration of being as being has a "priority of origin", not, however, a "priority of intention". The "first subject" of a science is supposed to be that whose knowledge is "principally intended".[16] Scotus's assertion in the opening question that God can be called the subject of metaphysics must apparently be understood in the sense that God is the end of metaphysical inquiry. But the term "subject" is then taken in a sense quite different from its usual meaning in the medieval discussions on the subject of a science.

The argument of the sixth and last doubt also questions the unity of the *metaphysica transcendens*. A demonstration proving that there is a "first" being is as such particular and cannot be established by the nature of being (*natura entis*). A demonstration of a transcendental property of being is thus prior to this proof, as the universal is prior to the particular. The tension between universality and particularity leads to the assumption that metaphysics has to be split up into two distinct sciences, of which the *metaphysica transcendens* will be prior to the divine science. The result will be that there are four theoretical sciences, transcendental metaphysics and three "special" sciences (theology, mathematics and physics).[17]

Scotus bases his reply on the scope of a science. It pertains to one and the same science to demonstrate (i) the common attributes that are convertible with the subject of that science, (ii) the attributes convertible with the subject in disjunction, and (iii) to establish the perfect member of the disjunctive property by a particular demonstration. That means in the case of metaphysics that it is its task to demonstrate: (i) the common properties of being, such as "one" and "true", (ii) the disjunctive properties of being, such as "first" and "second", and (iii) the existence of the "first" being.[18] This procedure shows that

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[16] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, I, q. 1, n. 140 (OP III, p. 64).

[17] *Ibid.*, n. 155 (p. 69): "Igitur metaphysica transcendens erit tota prior scientia divina, et ita erunt quattuor scientiae speculativae: una transcendens, et tres specials".

[18] *Ibid.*, n. 159 (p. 70): "Unde eiusdem scientiae est demonstrare passionem communem et simplicem convertibilem cum subiecto, et passionem disiunctam convertibilem cum subiecto, et alteram partem illius passionis disiunctae de subiecto, demonstratione particulari. Et ideo ipsius metaphysicae est demonstrare passiones

the theological particularity is incorporated into the universality of metaphysics.

Hence, Scotus rejects the idea of splitting up metaphysics into a transcendental and a special science and defends the unity of First Philosophy.[19] The study of the divine cannot be separated from transcendental metaphysics, since "all things naturally knowable of God will be (in terms of) transcendental". "The end (*finis*) of this science will be the perfect knowledge of being, which is knowledge of the first being. But what first occurs to the intellect as most knowable is being in general, and from this the primacy of the first being will be established".[20] Knowledge of being in general is the basis of our natural knowledge of God.

Scotus's innovation does not consist in the transcendental understanding of metaphysics but rather in the concept of transcendentality. Crucial in his rejection of a splitting up of metaphysics is a new element in his doctrine of the transcendentals, the idea of disjunctive properties. It enables him to conceive the relation between the consideration of being and the knowledge of God, which he understands as the end of First Philosophy, in such a way that "transcendental metaphysics" includes theology, since the knowledge of God is the completion of the transcendental explication of being. Whereas, in the Prologue, the expression *scientia transcendens* refers to the *communissima* as one of the objects of metaphysics and does not have a programmatic or polemic sense, the phrase *metaphysica transcendens* in the opening question is meant to express the onto-theological unity of this science. We shall encounter this motive more often, and this fact makes the characterization of Scotus's transcendental metaphysics as "pure ontology" highly questionable. We will return to this issue at the end of this chapter (9.5.2).

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entis, ut unum, verum etc. de ente, (…) et primum vel secundum de ente, et esse primum de ente".

[19] O. Boulnois, *Être et représentation. Une généalogie de la métaphysique moderne à l'époque de Duns Scot (XIII^e–XIV^e siècle)*, Paris 1999, p. 470 (cf. p. 508) attributes to Scotus "the doubling of metaphysics", which the *Doctor subtilis*, however, explicitly rejects.

[20] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, I, q. 1, n. 161 (OP III, p. 71): "Ideo vitando quattuor esse scientias speculativas, et hanc ponendo de Deo, omnia naturaliter cognoscibilia de ipso sunt transcendentia. Finis huius est perfecta cognitio entis, quae est cognitio primi. Sed primo occurrens et notissimum intellectui est ens in communi, et ex ipso probatur primitas".

9.2 Scotus's new conception of transcendentality

9.2.1 *Separation from commonness*

The inclusion of the divine

In the previous section we discussed the expressions *scientia transcendens* and *metaphysica transcendens*, which appeared to have different senses. What is Scotus's conception of "transcendental"? Like Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent, he did not devote a separate treatise to this topic, but presents the doctrine of the transcendentals in a specific context. In his case, it is also useful to consider this context because it clarifies the concrete problem to which the doctrine responds. Scotus's most extensive account is to be found in the *Ordinatio*, I, dist. 8, part 1; it is what Allan Wolter, in his fundamental study on Scotus's doctrine, calls "the key text".[21]

In this part Scotus examines the "simplicity of God" and raises the question "Is it compatible with divine simplicity that God or something formally said of God is in a genus?" (q. 3). He argues that a concept common to God and creature is in itself compatible with God's simplicity—a reply that presupposes Scotus's new theory of univocity, which (as we shall see) permeates through his conception of transcendentality. He adds, however, an important qualification to his conclusion: such a concept common to God and creature is not that of a genus, for (a) God is not in a genus nor (b) is what is formally, that is, intrinsically, said of God in a genus. Scotus provides arguments for both claims, and the argumentation for the second claim contains an exposition of what is transcendental.

The precise context of Scotus's treatment is thus the tension between the simplicity of God and the attribution of common predicates to

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[21] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, dist. 8, p. 1, q. 3, nn. 112–115 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. IV, Vatican 1956, pp. 205–207). A parallel text is in the *Lectura*, I, d. 8, p. 1, q. 3, nn. 106–110 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XVII, Vatican 1966, pp. 36–38). Cf. A. B. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1946 (Franciscan Institute Publications. Philosophy Series, 3); on the "key text", pp. 4–11. J. A. Aertsen, "Scotus's Conception of Transcendentality", in: H. Möhle / L. Honnefelder / A. Speer / Th. Kobusch / S. Bullido del Barrio (eds.), *Johannes Duns Scotus, 1308–2008. Die philosophischen Perspektiven seines Werkes. Investigations into his Philosophy*, Münster-St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 2010 (Archa Verbi. Subsidia, 5), pp. 107–123.

God; this commonness cannot be that of a genus, for that would be incompatible with God's transcendence. The context consequently is more specific than Allan Wolter suggests: "Scotus introduces his tract on the transcendentals from the standpoint of predication".[22] His problem rather concerns the predication *of God*, and this *theological* motive is not something incidental, but typical of Scotus's doctrine.

Revealing of Scotus's motivation and his understanding of transcendentality is an *adnotatio* he later added to his argumentation for the claim that what is formally said of God is not in a genus. Wolter could not include this addition in his analysis of the key text, since the addition was not known until the publication of the new critical edition, which he had not yet at his disposal.

In the "annotation" Scotus rearranges his account and distinguishes a negative and a positive part. The former part (a) concerns the account of the claim that God is not in a genus and is summarized in the negative statement "*nullum dictum de Deo est in genere*". Nothing said of God is in a genus, because what belongs to a genus is finite and limited. The latter part (b) concerns the account of the claim that what is formally said of God is not in a genus and is summarized in the positive statement "*quodlibet dictum de Deo est transcendens*".[23] This conversion of the negative statement ("Nothing said of God is in a genus") into its positive equivalent ("Whatever said of God is *transcendens*") deserves our attention.

Scotus formulates the common Scholastic view that God is not in a genus in a new way. Typical of the traditional view is Aquinas's reply to the question "Whether God is in some genus?" in his *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 3, which deals with God's simplicity. Thomas argues that if God were in a genus, this must be "being" (*ens*), for the genus signifies the essence of something and God's being (*esse*) is identical with his essence. But Aristotle has shown in the third book of his *Metaphysics* that "being" (*ens)* cannot be a genus of something. Hence, God is not in a genus.[24] The core of Aquinas's argument is the idea that "being" is not a genus, which was positively expressed by medieval authors in

[22] A. B. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, p. 7.

[23] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, dist. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 112, Adnotatio (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. IV, p. 205): "Negativa—'nullum dictum de Deo est in genere': ad hoc tres rationes (…). Affirmativa—'quodlibet dictum de Deo est transcendens': ubi primo illud *v* de transcendentibus".

[24] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 3, a. 5.

terms of the transcendentality of "being". Aquinas does not conclude, however, that if God is "being", he must be *transcendens*. Scotus goes a step further: just as Aristotle's negative statement, "being is not a genus", was converted by thirteenth-century authors, like Aquinas, into the positive statement, "being is a *transcendens*", likewise the common opinion that God is not in a genus was rephrased by Scotus to the effect that what is proper to God is *transcendens*.

The medieval term *transcendens* is ambivalent, as we illustrated in the first chapter by the work *Declaratio difficilium terminorum*, composed by Armandus de Bellovisu around 1326. In his explanation of the term *transcendens*, he distinguishes two main senses. The first mode (*transcendens* [1]) is based on the "nobility of being" and signifies that which is beyond every being, God; the other mode (*transcendens* [2]) is based on the "commonness of predication" and is said of every being. Scotus brings what is divine and what is common together in the notion of "*transcendens*". How does he manage the inclusion of the divine in the transcendental domain?

Another determination of transcendens

Scotus introduces his doctrine of the transcendentals in response to a doubt (*dubium*). What kind of predicates are those which are formally said of God, for instance, "wise" and "good"?[25] He does not explain what the difficulty is, but it must consist in the fact that these predicates are not only predicated of God but also of a creature. The common predication of "wisdom" serves as one of the main objections that Scotus had raised earlier to his opinion that a concept common to God and creature is compatible with divine simplicity. "Wisdom", it is argued, is univocally said of God and creature. If it is said of a creature, it signifies a quality of a substance, that is, something belonging to a genus. The same must hold in the case that "wisdom" is predicated of God, for otherwise the term would not be said univocally.[26]

Scotus's response to the doubt starts with a division of "being" (*ens*). It is divided into infinite and finite being before it is divided into the ten categories, for the latter member, finite being, is common to the

[25] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, dist. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 113 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. IV, p. 205): "Sed tunc est dubium, qualia sunt illa praedicata quae dicuntur de Deo, ut sapiens, bonus, etc.".

[26] *Ibid.*, n. 41 (p. 173); *Lectura* I, d. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 51 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVII, p. 17).

ten genera.[27] This division gives rise to some comments. What is common to the genera is what was signified by the term *transcendens* in the thirteenth century: transcendental notions "transcend" the genera in the sense that they are not determined to one category, but are common to all of them. Obviously Scotus considers the usual meaning of *transcendens* as too narrow, since it is restricted to the area of *finite* being, and wants to conceive the term in a much wider sense. To that end he presents a division of "being" prior to the division into the categories to the effect that "being" is common to finite and infinite: it is in itself "indifferent" to both modes (*de se indifferens ad finitum et infinitum*).[28]

From the primary division of "being" Scotus establishes the determination of *transcendens*. Whatever pertains to being insofar as it is "indifferent" to finite and infinite or as proper to infinite being does not pertain to it as determined to a genus but as prior to any such determination. Therefore, it is *transcendens* and outside any genus (*extra omne genus*). Scotus next applies this conclusion to predicates that are common to God and creatures. Such predicates belong to being insofar as it is indifferent to what is finite and infinite: for insofar as they pertain to God, they are infinite, insofar as they pertain to the creatures, they are finite. Hence they belong to being prior to its division into the ten categories. Consequently, any predicate of this kind is transcendental.[29]

Scotus mentions two conditions of *transcendens*: what is "indifferent" to the finite and infinite in the sense that it is "common" to God and creature, and what is proper to infinite being. Both features agree in their being not determined to a genus. This negative definition of *transcendens* enables Scotus to connect the two different senses of the medieval term: what is common and what is divine. But one could

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[27] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, dist. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 113 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. IV, pp. 205–206): "Respondeo. Ens prius dividitur in infinitum et finitum quam in decem praedicamenta, quia alterum istorum, scilicet 'finitum', est commune ad decem genera".

[28] *Ibid.*, n. 141 (p. 224).

[29] *Ibid.*, n. 113 (p. 206): "ergo quaecumque conveniunt enti ut indifferens ad finitum et infinitum, vel ut est proprium enti infinito, conveniunt sibi non ut determinatur ad genus sed ut prius, et per consequens ut est transcendens et est extra omne genus. Quaecumque sunt communia Deo et creaturae, sunt talia quae conveniunt enti ut est indifferens ad finitum et infinitum: ut enim conveniunt Deo, sunt infinita,—ut creaturae, sunt finita; ergo per prius conveniunt enti quam ens dividatur in decem genera, et per consequens quodcumque tale est transcendens".

wonder whether there is not an ambiguity in his concept of "transcendental", insofar as the negative definition conceals quite different reasons for being not determined to a genus: predicative commonness or ontological transcendence.[30]

Scotus's model of transcendentality is different from two other medieval models, that of Aquinas and that of Meister Eckhart. According to Aquinas, "transcendental" is what is common to the categories and is thus concerned with finite being. Meister Eckhart understands "transcendental" as something proper to God: *Deus communis est*. Scotus interprets transcendental commonness as what is common to God and creature. But at the same time he does not see commonness as the exclusive criterion of transcendentality.

Scotus distances himself from the current understanding of transcendental "commonness" in discussing another "doubt": how can "wisdom" (*sapientia*) be considered a *transcendens*, since it is not common to all beings but rather a "special" predicate?[31] He answers with an analogy (*sicut… ita*) between the most general genus (*generalissimum*) and the transcendental, an argument that results in a more precise understanding of the latter notion.

It is of the nature of the most general genus not to have any genus over and above it (*supraveniens*)—the terminology is derived from Porphyry's description of the "genus" in his work *De praedicabilibus* (see ch. 2.5). Nor does it belong to its nature to have several species contained under it (*sub se*). Both features are illustrated with the example of the category "when" (*quando*): since it has no genus above it, it is a most general genus, although it has few, if any species under it. Similarly it belongs to the notion of transcendental (*ratio transcendentis*) not to have any predicate above it except "being"; it does not, however, belong to its nature that it is said of all things. That it is common to many things under it is purely accidental (*accidit*).[32] The

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[30] Cf. O. Boulnois, "Quand commence l'ontothéologie? Aristote, Thomas d'Aquin et Duns Scot", in: *Revue Thomiste* 95 (1995), pp. 85–108; p. 108: "(…) il y a une ambiguité concernant le sens de 'transcendental' ".

[31] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, dist. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 114 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. IV, p. 206): "Sed tunc est aliud dubium, quomodo ponitur sapientia 'transcendens' cum non sit commune omnibus entibus". *Lectura*, I, dist. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 108 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVII, p. 37): "Sed dices: si sapientia per prius consequatur ens quam dividatur in genera, igitur sapientia erit transcendens,—quod videtur esse falsum, cum sit praedicatum speciale".

[32] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, dist. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 114 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. IV, p. 206): "Respondeo. Sicut de ratione 'generalissimi' non est habere sub se

fact that "wisdom" is a special predicate thus does not prevent it from being a *transcendens*. An essential aspect of Scotus's new conception is his separation of transcendentality from commonness as a necessary condition.

Disjunctive transcendentals

Scotus presents another argument for this separation, which implies a considerable extension of the transcendental domain. The argument introduces a distinction concerning the convertible properties (*passiones convertibiles*) of being (*ens*); the parallel text in the *Lectura* clarifies the step by making a comparison with the properties of number. The comparison is drawn from Aristotle's account of the ontological conception of First Philosophy in book IV of the *Metaphysics* (c. 2, 1004b 5ff.), in which he claims that as the arithmetician considers number and its proper attributes, like "even" and "odd", the "philosopher", i.e. the metaphysician, considers being and its proper attributes. Scotus interprets the analogy in the sense that just as a (natural) number has not only properties that as such are convertible with it—an example could be its divisibility by one and by itself—, but also has properties that are convertible with it under a disjunction—he is clearly thinking of Aristotle's example of "even" or "odd" here—, likewise "being" has these two kinds of convertible properties.[33]

On the basis of this idea Scotus shows the separation of transcendentality from commonness. "Being" not only has properties that as such (*simplices*) are convertible with it, as "one", "true" and "good", but possesses also properties which are opposed to one another, such as "necessary or possible", "act or potency". The coextensive attributes are transcendental, because they are consequent upon being insofar as it is not determined to any genus. The disjunctive properties are likewise transcendental, since neither member determines its determinable element to a definite genus. Nonetheless one member of the disjunction is special (*speciale*) and pertains formally to one single being, such

plures species sed non habere aliud supraveniens genus (sicut hoc praedicamentum 'quando'—quia non habet supraveniens genus—est generalissimum, licet paucas habeat species, vel nullas), ita transcendens quodcumque nullum habet genus sub quo contineatur. Unde de ratione transcendentis est non habere praedicatum supraveniens nisi ens, sed quod ipsum sit commune ad multa inferiora, hoc accidit".

[33] Duns Scotus, *Lectura*, I, d. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 109 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVII, p. 37).

as "necessary" in the disjunction "necessary or possible being" and "infinite" in the disjunction "finite or infinite". It is thus not necessary that a transcendental as transcendental be predicated of everything, unless it is convertible with the first transcendental, namely "being". So "wisdom" or any other predicate that is formally said of God and creature can be *transcendens*.[34]

Scotus introduces a new type of transcendental, the disjunctive properties of being; it was this type, with which he started his account of the doctrine: the primary division of "being" into finite and infinite. Is the introduction an original idea of Scotus? The "Subtle Doctor" conveys the impression that the idea is implied in the structure of science: every science investigates the properties that belong to its subject, and these properties can be of two kinds; they can be as such convertible with the subject or in disjunction. In this respect Scotus had predecessors: Avicenna, in his *Metaphysics*, argues that the subject of First Philosophy is being-as-being and that this science examines the properties (*accidentalia propria*) of being, such as "one and many", "potency and act", "universal and particular", and "possible and necessary". Albertus Magnus repeats this view in his *Metaphysics* commentary.[35] What is, however, new in Scotus's metaphysics is the importance of the disjunctive transcendentals for our knowledge of God. It has been suggested that in this respect a source may have been

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[34] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 115 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. IV, pp. 206–207): "Hoc patet ex alio, quia ens non tantum habet passiones simplices convertibiles,—sicut unum, verum et bonum—sed habet aliquas passiones ubi opposita distinguuntur contra se, sicut necesse-esse vel possibile, actus vel potentia, et huiusmodi. Sicut autem passiones convertibiles sunt transcendentes quia consequuntur ens in quantum non determinatur ad aliquod genus, ita passione disiunctae sunt transcendentes, et utrumque membrum illius disiuncti est transcendens quia neutrum determinat suum determinabile ad certum genus: et tamen unum membrum illius disiuncti formaliter est speciale, non conveniens nisi uni enti,—sicut necesse-esse in ista divisione 'necesse-esse vel possibile-esse', et infinitum in ista divisione 'finitum vel infinitum', et sic de aliis. Ita etiam potest sapientia esse transcendens, et quodcumque aliud, quod est commune Deo et creaturae, licet aliquod tale dicatur de solo Deo, aliquod autem de Deo et aliqua creatura. Non oportet autem transcendens, ut transcendens, dici de quocumque ente nisi sit convertibile cum primo transcendente, scilicet ente".

[35] Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina*, I, c. 2 (ed. S. Van Riet, Louvain-Leiden 1977, p. 13): "Ideo primum subiectum huius scientiae est ens, inquantum est ens; et ea quae inquirit sunt consequentia ens, inquantum est ens, sine condicione (…). Et ex his quaedam sunt ei quasi accidentalia propria, sicut unum et multum, potentia et effectus [*corrige:* actus], universale et particulare, possibile et necesse". Cf. Albert the Great, *Metaphysica*, I, tr. 1, c. 2 (ed. B. Geyer, p. 4).

Bonaventure, who in *De mysterio Trinitatis* bases one of his "ways" that prove God's existence on ten "differences of being", such as "possible being and necessary being", "being in potency and being in act" (see ch. 4.2.2).[36] Yet what is unprecedented in Scotus is his understanding of the disjunctive properties of being as transcendental.

9.2.2 *Transcendentality and perfection*

1. Scotus's key text enumerates three classes of transcendentals: (i) "Being", the "first" transcendental, common to all things; (ii) properties that as such are convertible with "being"; and (iii) the disjunctive properties of being. It is noteworthy that Allan Wolter takes it for granted that not three, but four types are distinguished in this text. That he simply adds a fourth type has to do with an obscurity in Scotus's classification, namely, the place of "wisdom", which was actually the immediate reason for his account.

There does not seem any option possible other than to locate "wisdom" in the class of disjunctive properties. That was also the reading, although with some hesitation, of the Spanish Scotist Peter Thomae (d. 1340), who in his *Quodlibet* discusses a number of questions as to the transcendental notions (see ch. 10.3). The second question, dealing with the transcendentality of "wisdom", begins with explicating Scotus's entire exposition in the *Ordinatio* through seven statements. The last one reads: "Wisdom is *transcendens*, for it is a property of being, and, as I believe (*ut credo*), a disjunctive property, since some being is wise, and some being is not wise".[37] This exegesis may be correct, but Peter's hesitation is understandable, for "wisdom" does not fit well into the scheme. It seems rather trivial to base its transcendentality on the contention that the opposites "wise" and "not-wise" are disjunctive properties of "being".

It is therefore natural that Allan Wolter, in his analysis of Scotus's main account, singles out a fourth class of transcendentals, that of the "pure perfections", which have not been included in one of the above types. They are of two kinds: perfections predicable of God alone, such

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[36] R. Lay, "*Passiones entis disiunctae*. Ein Beitrag zur Problemgeschichte der Transzendentalienlehre", in: *Theologie und Philosophie* 42 (1967), pp. 51–78 and pp. 358–389.

[37] Petrus Thomae, *Quodlibet*, p. 1, q. 2, a. 3 (ed. M. R. Hooper / E. M. Buytaert, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1957 (Franciscan Institute Publications. Text Series, 11), p. 31).

as omnipotence, and perfections predicable of God as well as of creatures, such as wisdom and free will.[38] Although this fourth class is not explicated in Scotus's key text, the idea is certainly justified by other passages in his work.

A clear example is a *dubium* that Scotus raises shortly after his account of the transcendentals: Is "this wisdom in us", that is, created wisdom, an *individuum* of wisdom that is *transcendens* or one that belongs to the genus of quality? He presents three hypotheses: "this individual wisdom" is both transcendental and a quality is only transcendental or is only a quality. He rejects the last possibility, for this would imply that there is not a *perfectio simpliciter* in creatures. The second hypothesis means that not every habitus is in the category of quality, for "all that includes an absolute perfection is transcendental" (*omnes sunt transcendentes, qui important perfectionem simpliciter*).[39] Central to Scotus's discussion of transcendental "wisdom" is not the notion of a disjunctive property but that of a "pure perfection".

2. The idea of "perfection" is a general presupposition and implicit condition of the medieval doctrine of the transcendentals "being", "one", "true" and "good". The notion of "perfect" was not regarded as a separate transcendental but connected with the concept of "good" (*bonum*), which played a crucial role in the formation of the doctrine in Philip the Chancellor's *Summa de bono*. A distinctive feature of Meister Eckhart's doctrine of the transcendentals was the inclusion of "spiritual perfections", like "justice" and "wisdom". The concept of "most general perfection" seems to become the more encompassing notion, including the traditional transcendentals and the spiritual perfections that can be analogically said of God and creature. His source may have been Henry of Ghent who understood the "first intentions" of the intellect, like "being", "one", "true", "good", "just" and "beautiful", as notions that signify "some dignity and nobility" in God and creatures and are said to be "common" to God and creature by a community of analogy. What is new in Scotus is not only the univocal

[38] A. B. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, p. 11. For his analysis of the "pure perfections", pp. 162–175. Cf. W. Hoeres, *Der Wille als reine Vollkommenheit nach Duns Scotus*, München 1962 (Salzburger Studien zur Philosophie, 1).

[39] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 8, p. 1, q. 3, nn. 154–156 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. IV, p. 229).

interpretation of this commonness—one of his principal arguments for the univocity of being concerns the perfections common to God and creature—, but also the explicit connection between perfection and transcendentality.

Illustrative in this respect is Scotus's treatise *De primo principio*, in which he proves the existence and perfection of the first nature and introduces the notion of "pure perfection" (*perfectio simpliciter*): "Every pure perfection is necessarily in the highest nature, and in the highest degree".[40] Scotus elaborates the idea of a "simple" or "pure" perfection by using a description given by Anselm of Canterbury in his *Monologion*. In chapter 15 of this work, Anselm examines what predicates can be said of the divine nature, not *relative*, that is, in relation to the created world, like "first" and "highest", but *substantialiter*. As a criterion for selecting predicates that signify the divine essence he formulates the rule: "that which is absolutely better than what is not it" (*ipsum omnino melius quam non-ipsum*). Based on this criterion Anselm concludes that the divine nature is necessarily "alive", "wise", "(all-)mighty", "true", "just", "happy" and "eternal".[41]

Scotus understands what he calls Anselm's "famous description" (*famosa descriptio*) as a description of a "pure perfection" (*perfectio simpliciter*)—a term not used by Anselm—, and adds the phrase *in quolibet*: "A pure perfection is said to be something which is better in anything whatsoever than what is not it" (*quae in quolibet melius ipsum quam non ipsum*). It is better "in anything whatsoever", not "for everything" (*cuilibet*) of a determinate nature; one cannot say, for instance, that it would be better for a dog to be wise, since the possession of "wisdom" is incompatible with its nature and would destroy it. The phrase *in quolibet* in the description refers to the supposit as such, dissociated from the specific nature whose supposit it is, that is, considered as "being".[42] This means that for Scotus a "pure

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[40] Duns Scotus, *Tractatus de primo principio*, c. 4.9, concl. 3 (ed. and transl. A. B. Wolter, in: *John Duns Scotus. A Treatise on God as First Principle*, Chicago 1966, p. 79): "Omnis perfectio simpliciter, et in summo, inest necessario Naturae Summae".

[41] Anselm of Canterbury, *Monologion*, c. 15 (ed. F. S. Schmitt, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. I, Seckau 1938 [reprinted in Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1968], pp. 28–9).

[42] Duns Scotus, *De primo principio*, c. 4.10, concl. 3 (ed. Wolter, pp. 78–81). See the commentary by W. Kluxen, *Johannes Duns Scotus, Abhandlung über das erste Prinzip*, Darmstadt 1974, pp. 195–196. Cf. *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, q. 5, n. 13 (ed. L. Vivès, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXV, Paris 1895, p. 216b): "Secundo intelligitur *in quocumque*, non pro quacumque natura, sed pro quocumque supposito, non intelligendo, ut est

perfection" is not restricted to finite being and acquires a transcendental character.

The important function of the idea of a "pure perfection" is evident from its place in Scotus's treatise *De primo principio*. The notion is introduced in view of the question what predicates can be essentially said of the first nature—another indication of the weight of the *theological* motive in Scotus's doctrine of the transcendentals. The idea of an absolute perfection is closely related to the traditional issue of the divine names in medieval metaphysics. Thomas Aquinas is an illustration of this: he appeals to the notion of perfection and to Anselm's description in his discussion of the question "Whether some name can be properly (*proprie*) said of God?". Names signifying some perfection absolutely can be properly said of God, such as "wisdom" and "goodness", for these attributes meet Anselm's criterion that it is altogether better to be than not to be.[43] Yet for Aquinas this is not a reason to regard "wisdom" as a transcendental.

The group of "pure perfections" is for Scotus in fact more than one class of transcendentals alongside other types. "*Omnia transcendentia* are called '*perfectiones simpliciter*' ", Scotus states, because they do not include a limitation and are not finite from themselves, but belong to God in the highest degree.[44] But how can he say "*all* transcendentals"? He seems to ignore the less perfect member in the class of disjunctive transcendentals. And what about "being"?—the question is controversial among scholars. But it would be strange, if the first transcendental, which virtually includes the properties "true" and "good", would not be

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talis naturae, vel talis, sed absolute accepto, ut est tale suppositum praescindendo rationem naturae, cujus est suppositum".

[43] Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 22, q. 1, a. 2 (ed. R. P. Mandonnet, Paris 1929, p. 535): "Unde dicendum est, quod omnia illa nomina quae imponuntur ad significandum perfectionem aliquam absolute, proprie dicuntur de Deo (…), ut sapentia, bonitas, essentia et omnia hujusmodi; et haec sunt de quibus dicit Anselmus quod simpliciter et omnino melius est esse quam non esse".

[44] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, n. 135 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, Vatican 1954, p. 84), where Scotus argues that "one" and "true" are not species in any genus, since "omnes species cuiuscumque generis, includunt limitationem, et ita quodcumque transcendens esset de se finitum, et per consequens repugnaret enti infinito, nec posset dici de ipso formaliter, quod est falsum, quia omnia transcendentia dicunt 'perfectiones simpliciter' et conveniunt Deo in summo". Cf. J. A. Seifert, "Transcendentals and Pure Perfections", in: H. Burkhart / B. Smith (eds.), *Handbook of Metaphysics and Ontology*, Vol. 2, München 1991, pp. 909–911, in particular p. 909: "Thus the deepest essence and the common feature of all transcendentals becomes their character of being pure perfections".

a pure perfection.[45] In any case, Scotus's statement indicates the close connection between transcendentality and perfection in his conception. The concept of "pure perfection" seems to be a decisive motive in his separation of transcendentality and commonness. Moreover, the notion of "pure perfection" expresses another, *positive* understanding of transcendentality as a complement to the purely negative definition "what is not determined to a genus". Discussions by fourteenth-century Scotists, such as Peter Thomae, show that the notion of *perfectio simpliciter* had become a part of the doctrine of the transcendentals.

9.3 Transcendentality and univocity

An epoch-making innovation of Scotus's doctrine of the transcendentals bears upon his understanding of "commonness", the traditional feature of these notions. He interprets it in a radical manner as that which is *univocally* common to God and creature. His claim of the univocity of being means a turn in the medieval theory of the transcendentals.[46] The rise of this doctrine in the thirteenth century was closely connected with the "invention of analogy" as a third type of predication besides univocity and equivocity. What is transcendental goes beyond the categorial order of the genera and *ipso facto* transcends the domain of univocal predication. "Analogical" unity became the mark of transcendentality.

Scotus challenges this view by claiming the univocity of being. He expounds the most innovative aspect of his teaching in three separate but related discussions in the *Ordinatio*. The first, on the natural knowledge of God (I, d. 3), is a critical examination of Henry of Ghent's

[45] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 59 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 40–41). W. Hoeres, *Der Wille als reine Vollkommenheit nach Duns Scotus*, defends that "being" is a perfection; W. Kluxen criticizes this view in his review of Hoeres' study in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 49 (1967), pp. 98–112.

[46] The literature is vast. We mention A. B. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, pp. 31–57. T. A. Barth, "Being, Univocity and Analogy according to Duns Scotus", in: J. K. Ryan / B. M. Bonansea (eds.), *John Duns Scotus, 1265–1965*, Washington, D.C., 1965 (Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, 3), pp. 210–262. L. Honnefelder, *Ens inquantum ens*, pp. 268–313. O. Boulnois, *Jean Duns Scot. Sur la connaissance de Dieu et l'univocité de l'étant*, Paris 1988. G. Pini, "Univocity in Scotus' *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*". An excellent summary of Scotus's arguments is given by S. D. Dumont, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus", in: J. Marenbon (ed.), *Routledge History of Philosophy*, Vol. III: *Medieval Philosophy*, London – New York 1998, pp. 291–328.

position and contains Scotus's most influential arguments for univocity; the second, also in the context of the natural knowledge of God, concerns the question as to the first object of the intellect and contains Scotus's distinction between the univocity of being and its univocal predication; the third context is the divine simplicity (I, d. 8)—that is, the same context in which he advances his main account of the transcendentals—and contains fundamental objections against the thesis of the univocity: it "seems to destroy the whole of philosophy". In our analysis we first consider successively the arguments and objections; Scotus's distinction between the univocity of being and its univocal predication, which is the second part of his doctrine of univocity, will be analyzed in the section on the first object of the intellect (9.4.4).

9.3.1 *Arguments for the univocity of being*

1. According to Henry of Ghent, transcendentals are the way towards God and Duns Scotus agrees with him. Henry holds that the proof of God's existence from the first concepts presupposes the analogical unity of the concepts of divine being and of created being. Right at the beginning of his discussion with Henry, Scotus questions this presupposition. He maintains that God is conceived *not only* in a concept analogous to that of a creature but also in a concept univocally common to both.[47] He wants to show that Henry's doctrine of analogy requires a univocal conception of being as a condition for the possibility of natural knowledge of God.

Scotus clearly states what he means by "univocity". He defines it as "a concept whose unity is sufficient to cause a contradiction when affirmed and denied of the same thing", or is sufficient for serving as a middle term in a syllogism without the fallacy of equivocation.[48] His definition of univocity is different from Aristotle's description in the opening chapter of the *Categories*, according to which things are

[47] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 26 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, p. 18): "(…) dico quod non tantum in conceptu analogo conceptui creaturae concipitur Deus, scilicet qui omnino sit alius ab illo qui de creatura dicitur, sed in conceptu aliquo univoco sibi et creaturae".

[48] *Ibid.*: "Et ne fiat contentio de nomine univocationis, univocum conceptum dico, qui ita est unus quod eius unitas sufficit ad contradictionem, affirmando et negando ipsum de eodem; sufficit etiam pro medio syllogistico, ut extrema unita in medio sic uno sine fallacia aequivocationis concludantur inter se uniri".

univocal if "they have both the name and the concept (*ratio*) of the essence in common". Whereas in Aristotle univocity is a three-place relationship, involving things, names and concepts, Scotus's definition focuses entirely on the *concept*. It determines its unity in a formal and negative manner, namely, by the exclusion of contradiction and the fallacy of equivocation.

Scotus's criterion of univocity is intimately connected with the principle of contradiction. We remember (see ch. 6.3.1) that Thomas Aquinas gave a transcendental foundation to this principle, Aristotle's *anhypotheton*, by reducing it to the first concept of the intellect, "being". In Scotus's view this foundational function is only possible, if the concept of being possesses some unity, minimal though this is. This minimal unity, sufficient for the univocity of being, consists in the absence of contradiction and is a necessary precondition of a science of being in general.

2. Scotus advances five main arguments in favour of the univocity of being in the body of his discussion with Henry of Ghent. But in an annotation to his account he admits that Henry would only be concerned about the first and fourth of these demonstrations because they really prove that there is a univocally common concept.[49] We focus on these two arguments, since our concern is not a complete file on univocity, but insight into the transforming power of this conception.

The first proof for univocity was designated by Scotus as the argument from a "certain and doubtful concept" (*de conceptu certo et dubio*). It was generally recognized as the strongest by his followers and was cited in nearly every discussion in the fourteenth century. Scotus argues as follows:

> [Major:] An intellect certain about one concept, but doubtful about others, has a concept about which it is certain that is different from the concepts about which it is doubtful.
> [Minor:] But the intellect of the wayfarer can be certain that God is a being while doubting whether he is finite or infinite being.
> [Conclusion:] Therefore, the concept of being is different from the concept of infinite or finite being; it is included in both and hence univocal to both.[50]

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[49] *Adnotatio Duns Scoti* (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 29–31).

[50] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 27 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, p. 18): "Primo sic: omnis intellectus, certus de uno conceptu et dubius de diversis,

Is Scotus's argument compelling? The modern reader will not be convinced of the correctness of the minor premise: he is not only in doubt about the mode of being of the first principle, but of its being as such. The premise is in Scotus's view *de facto* true, as "the controversy among the philosophers" on the first principle of being shows. They disputed about the mode of being of this principle (Is it created or uncreated, material or immaterial?), but did not doubt that the first principle they posited is a being.[51] The argument is, of course, not bound to the example used in the minor premise. In other places, Scotus gives the instance of light: the intellect can be certain that light is a being while doubting whether it is a substance or an accident.[52]

Scotus's first proof is inspired by Avicenna's doctrine of the primary notions, which seems to imply a moment of univocity, when it teaches that "being" is conceived prior to any other notion. Scotus's argument assumes that what is first known by the intellect, "being", is a simple concept, which can be conceived without the proper modes of being. Its simplicity was explicitly stated by the Arab philosopher (*Metaphysica*, I, c. 5): "All men conceive 'being' without knowing at all that it must be either active or passive".

The outcome of Scotus's argument meant a transformation of Henry of Ghent's analogical concept of transcendental being. For Henry it is not a simple, distinct concept but a notion that resulted from the confusion of two diverse *rationes* of being, of which one, that of "negatively undetermined being", is proper to God, and the other, that of "privatively undetermined being", proper to the creature. Scotus replaces Henry's model of analogy with a concept of being that has one simple *ratio*, is distinct, is univocally common and can only be known with certitude.

3. Scotus's fourth argument for the univocity concerns the commonness of an "absolute perfection" (*perfectio simpliciter*), such as "wis-

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habet conceptum de quo est certus alium a conceptibus de quibus est dubius (…). Sed intellectus viatoris potest esse certus de Deo quod sit ens, dubitando de ente finito vel infinito, creato vel increato; ergo conceptus entis de Deo est alius a conceptu isto et illo, et ita neuter ex se et in utroque illorum includitur; igitur univocus". *Ibid.*, n. 44, *Adnotatio Duns Scoti* (p. 29): "prima [ratio] de conceptu certo et dubio".

[51] *Ibid.*, n. 29 (pp. 18–19). *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 23 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, p. 233).

[52] Cf. Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, IV, q. 1, n. 46 (OP III, pp. 306–307).

dom". The idea of an "absolute perfection", adopted from Anselm of Canterbury, has, as we have seen (9.2.2) a central place in his doctrine of the transcendentals. Scotus wants to show that a pure perfection, which all theologians consider to be the analogical basis for our natural knowledge of God, can only be predicated of God, if there is a univocally common *ratio* of this perfection.

The proof departs from a disjunction: a pure perfection has either (i) a *ratio* common to God and creature or (ii) does not. It argues that the latter, negative part is impossible and that only the former possibility therefore remains (which is Scotus's contention). If a pure perfection does not have a *ratio* common to God and creature, this is either (ii,a) because the *ratio* is only proper to creatures, which is absurd, for it would imply that God lacks a pure perfection, or (ii,b) because the *ratio* is wholly proper to God. In that case, a pure perfection is not attributed to God because it is a pure perfection, but is rather a pure perfection because it is attributed to God. This, however, would be contrary to the sense of Anselm's doctrine of an absolute perfection. According to Anselm, one can determine what a pure perfection is without any reference to God. That is, something is first determined to constitute a pure perfection and is then attributed to God, not the reverse.[53]

Scotus's proof demonstrates that an absolute perfection is as such prior to its attribution to God. It must thus have a common *ratio*, distinct from the *ratio* proper to God. The idea of a pure perfection supports the view that a univocal concept is presupposed by the analogically related concepts of a divine and a created perfection.

Scotus sees confirmation of this argument in "every metaphysical inquiry about God" (*omnis inquisitio metaphysica de Deo*). Such an examination proceeds by way of removal and eminence: it considers some formal notion, such as "wisdom" in itself, by removing from it the imperfection this notion has in a creature, for instance, that wisdom is an accidental quality; it then ascribes to this formal notion the highest degree of perfection and attributes the concept to God. Every metaphysical inquiry thus presupposes a common univocal concept, taken from the creatures.[54] Univocity proves to be a condition of the *metaphysica transcendens*.

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[53] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 38 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, p. 25).

[54] *Ibid.*, n. 39 (pp. 26–27): "Confirmatur etiam haec quarta ratio sic: omnis inquisitio metaphysica de Deo sic procedit, considerando formalem rationem alicuius et

9.3.2 *"Destruction of the whole of philosophy?"*

1. Duns Scotus himself advances no insignificant objection to the doctrine of the univocity of being: it "seems to destroy the whole of philosophy" (*totam philosophiam*).[55] Why? A formidable obstacle for his contemporaries was the incompatibility of a univocal concept of being with the project of a transcendental philosophy, because this position seems to reduce being to a genus. According to the generally accepted view a "univocal transcendental" is a contradiction in terms.[56] Scotus's doctrine of univocity contradicts a long tradition concerning the predicability of transgeneric terms, since it would imply the rejection of Aristotle's thesis that being is not a genus and the inadequacy of Porphyry's classification of universal predicates. One of Aquinas's arguments against the univocity of being was based on the idea that the domain of univocal predication and the order of the five Porphyrian predicables are coextensive: "Whatever is predicated univocally of different things must be a genus, or species, or difference, or accident, or property" (*Summa contra Gentiles*, I, c. 32). Aquinas argues that none of these possibilities are applicable to the predication of "being" of God and creature (see ch. 6.5.3). Scotus's claim of the univocity of being denies the conclusion that transcendental terms transcend the Porphyrian order of the predicables.

The most serious difficulty for a doctrine of univocity are the metaphysical-theological consequences: a concept of being univocally common to God and creatures would threaten the transcendence and simplicity of the divine nature. Several of Aquinas's arguments showing that nothing can be predicated univocally of God and creatures are based on the fundamental ontological difference between what is being by its essence and what is being by participation. One of the reasons that Henry of Ghent rejected the univocity of transcenden-

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auferendo ab illa ratione formali imperfectionem quam habet in creaturis, er reservando illam rationem formalem et attribuendo sibi omnino summam perfectionem, et sic attribuendo illud Deo. Exemplum de formali ratione sapientiae (…). Ergo omnis inquisitio de Deo supponit intellectum habere conceptum eundem, univocum, quem accepit ex creaturis".

[55] Duns Scotus, *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 105 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, p. 264): "Sed contra. Videtur enim quod hoc destruat totam philosophiam, ponere univocationem entis ad omnia".

[56] Cf. S. D. Dumont, "Transcendental Being: Scotus and Scotists", in: *Topoi* 11 (1992), pp. 135–148.

tal being was that he did not see how one can sustain a real concept of being univocally common to God and creatures without positing a reality common to them, for a real common concept must correspond to a real community. Moreover, the common concept of being should be determined to a concept proper to God through a qualification that is related to the common concept as a difference to a genus.[57] It seems that God is not wholly diverse from creatures and that the divine nature is not wholly simple but composed of genus (being) and difference. Scotus himself points out the difficulty (*dubium*): "How is a real concept common to God and creature possible unless it is taken from some reality of the same genus?"[58]

2. Scotus categorically rejects the objection that his conception of univocity has disastrous philosophical effects: "I am not destroying philosophy but those who hold the contrary [of the univocity of being] are destroying philosophy".[59] His general strategy is to show that his opponents wrongly assume that the doctrine of univocity means a reduction of being to a genus.

In order to clarify that his position is in line with the philosophical tradition Scotus provides a remarkable sample of Aristotle exegesis. The reason for Aristotle's claim "being is not a genus" was not the equivocity of being, but its greater univocal community than that of a genus.[60] Aristotle even implicitly recognizes, Scotus suggests, that there are univocal transcendental predicates that are not genera. In his argument in book II of the *Metaphysics* (c. 1), concluding that "each thing is related to truth in the same way as it is to being", the Philosopher states that the cause of truth is one having the same name

[57] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 39 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. IV, p. 169) advances the following argument in favor of the idea that God is in a genus: "Quod sic: Quia Deus formaliter est ens, ens autem dicit conceptum dictum de Deo in 'quid'—et iste conceptus non est proprius Deo, sed communis sibi et creaturae (…); ergo oportet quod ad hoc quod fiat proprius, quod determinetur per aliquem conceptum determinantem: ille 'determinans' se habet ad conceptum entis sicut conceptus 'qualis' ad conceptum 'quid', et per consequens ut conceptus differentiae ad conceptum generis".

[58] *Ibid.*, n. 137 (p. 221): "Sed hic est unum dubium, quomodo potest conceptus communis Deo et creaturae 'realis' accipi, nisi ab aliqua realitate eiusdem generis".

[59] Duns Scotus, *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 110 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, p. 265).

[60] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 123 (p. 273).

and common *ratio* as its effect. That is to say, truth is univocally said of God and creature.[61]

Scotus denies that univocity is coextensive with the Porphyrian predicables, as Thomas Aquinas presupposes in his argument against the univocal predication of being. Scotus points to the limits of Porphyry's approach, insofar as the author explicitly relates his *Isagoge* to Aristotle's *Categories*. Hence, he spoke of the universals that are found in the predicamental order. But besides these one can posit a *universale transcendens* that does not belong to any category. There are even two kinds of "transcendental universals", namely, one predicated *in quid*, such as "being", and the other predicated *in quale*, such as "one", which is a property of being.[62] Similar distinctions were made by Scotus's followers. Peter of Aquila (d. 1361) presents a *duplex univocatio* by distinguishing a "transcendental univocity" (*univocatio transcendens*), which is proper to "being", from a "categorial univocity" (*univocatio praedicamentalis*) found in genera. William of Alnwick terms the univocity of the concept of being a *superunivocatio*.[63]

Scotus's response to the doubt how a univocally common concept of being is compatible with the real diversity of God and creature introduces a new model for understanding the differences of being. The relation of being to its disjunctive determinations of "finite" and "infinite" must not be understood according to the model of genus and difference, but as the determination of a form to its intrinsic "modes" or "degrees" (for this model, see 9.5.2). The common concept of being and the concept proper to God are taken, not from two distinct reali-

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[61] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 126 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. IV, pp. 215–216), where he concludes: "Ergo implicite in istis docuit aliquod praedicatum transcendens dici in 'quid', et non esse genus nec definitionem,—et alia praedicata transcendentia dici in 'quale' (ut verum)".

[62] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, IV, q. 1, n. 51 (OP III, p. 308): "Praeter autem illud potest poni universale transcendend quod ad nullum praedicamentum pertinet, et duo universalia transcendentia: unum quod dicitur 'in quid', ens scilicet; aliud 'in quale', ut unum etc.".

[63] Peter of Aquila, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 3, q. 1, a. 3 (ed. Speyer 1480 [reprinted in Frankfurt am Main 1967], unfoliated): "Et ad hoc est notandum quod sicut potest esse duplex ratio in qua aliqua conveniunt, ita potest esse duplex univocatio. Nam aliqua conveniunt in ratione transcendenti, aliqua conveniunt in ratione praedicamentali. Ideo est quaedam univocatio transcendens et quaedam praedicamentalis. Et prima univocatio convenit enti, secunda non". William of Alnwick, *In I Sententiarum*, q. 8 (ed. S. D. Dumont, in: *Mediaeval Studies* 49 (1987), p. 62): "Communitas intentionis entis non est solum univocationis sed potius superunivocationis, quoniam est universale transcendens eo quod ad nullum praedicamentum pertinet".

ties related as genus and difference but from one and the same reality of infinite being, conceived, however, differently: the common concept conceives this reality in an imperfect manner, namely without its intrinsic mode, the proper concept conceives the same reality perfectly, namely together with its intrinsic mode. The distinction between the common concept of being and the concept proper to God is the distinction between an imperfect or deficient and a perfect or adequate conception of the same reality.[64]

The concept of being is thus common to God and creature, not because it refers to some common reality but because the two wholly diverse realities of infinite and finite being are conceived in it in an imperfect manner. Scotus can therefore conclude that "God and creature are wholly diverse really (*realiter primo diversa*) [...] and yet agree in one concept".[65] His thesis of the unity of the *concept* of being starts a philosophical development terminating in what has been called the "logic of the transcendental".[66]

9.4 The cognitive primacy of "being"

9.4.1 *A new stage in the debate on the first object of the intellect*

An essential feature of the transcendental notions is their cognitive priority: they are the first conceptions of the intellect. In his criticism of the Franciscan claim that divine being is what is first known, Thomas Aquinas interpreted Avicenna's idea of primary notions in terms of the "proper object" of the intellect: since "being" is what is first known it is the *obiectum proprium* of the intellect. Henry of Ghent had argued that God is what is first known, though indeterminately and indistinctly. Duns Scotus's thought is also innovative in this respect; it represents a new stage in the medieval debate on what is first known

[64] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 138 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. IV, p. 222).

[65] Duns Scotus, *Lectura*, I, d. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 129 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVII, p. 46): "Patet igitur, ex dictis, quod Deus et creatura realiter sunt primo diversa, in nulla realitate convenientia (...); et tamen conveniunt in uno conceptu, ita quod potest esse unus conceptus formatus per intellectum imperfectum, communis Deo et creaturae".

[66] Cf. for this expression, J. F. Courtine, *Inventio analogiae. Métaphysique et onto-théologie*, Paris 2005, p. 283.

by his distribution of the first object. He distinguishes three orders of intelligibility to which different primacies (*primitates*) correspond.

When dealing with the natural knowability of God (*de cognoscibilitate Dei*), Scotus raises the question of whether God is what is first known by us in this life. But to his mind the phrase "first known" is indefinite, for one has to distinguish a "threefold order of what is intelligible", the order of origin (*ordo originis*) or according to generation, the order of perfection (*ordo perfectionis*), and the order of adequation (*ordo adaequationis*) or precise causality.[67] This differentiation has immediate repercussions on the discussion of the question. Whether God or something else is first known or the first object of the intellect depends on the order of intelligibility one considers.

Scotus's explanation of the three orders is meager; he confines himself to a series of references. "The first two primacies are dealt with in book IX of the *Metaphysics* (c. 8), in which it is said that 'what is prior according to generation is posterior according to substance'".[68] The reference to this text is quite natural, since book IX of the *Metaphysics* treats of "potency" and "act", notions that are central in medieval accounts of the process of knowledge. Our intellect proceeds in its cognition from potency to act; what is prior and posterior in the temporal order is therefore reverse to what is prior and posterior in the order of perfection. In the former what is first is in potency and imperfect, in the latter order act is absolutely (*simpliciter*) prior to potency. What is unusual and new in Scotus's analysis is the presentation of a third order, that of adequation.

Concerning this third "primacy" he refers to the definition of (commensurate) "universal" in book I of the *Posterior Analytics* (c. 4).[69] The context of the passage is not the process of knowledge, but the order of predication. Aristotle introduces a firstness that is related to the idea of predicative commensuration: a predicate is commensurate or adequate to the subject, when it belongs to a subject in virtue of itself (*per se*) and primarily (*primo*). The attribute, for instance, of "having angles equal to two right angles" belongs necessarily to an isosceles,

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[67] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 69 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, p. 48): "dico quod triplex est ordo intelligibilium in proposito: unus est ordo originis sive secundum generationem, alius est ordo perfectionis, tertius est ordo adaequationis sive causalitatis praecisae".

[68] *Ibid.*, n. 70 (pp. 48–49).

[69] *Ibid.* (p. 49): "De tertia prioritate habetur I *Posteriorum*, in definitione 'universalis', quia 'primo' ibi dicit praecisionem sive adaequationem".

however, not primarily, but belongs *primo* to the triangle qua triangle. Scotus applies Aristotle's idea of a commensurate first in the order of predication to the order of knowledge: the first object in the order of adequation is the object that is commensurate to the power or faculty as such so that it is proportioned to all possible objects of that power. This order turns out to be the crucial one in Scotus's distribution of the first object of the intellect.

The distribution provides the basis for a critical assessment of the positions of Aquinas and Henry of Ghent, and enables Scotus to determine more precisely the meaning of the claim that being is what is first known. In no medieval author do we encounter such a differentiated analysis of the first object of the human intellect and of the cognitive primacy of "being" in its connection with univocity and the possibility of a *scientia transcendens*.[70]

9.4.2 *What is first known in the order of origin: "Being"*

"Being" is not what is first known confusedly

Scotus's analysis of the first object in the order of origin intends to establish the precise meaning of the common claim that being is what is first known. To that end he thinks it necessary to make some preliminary distinctions. A first one is the differentiation between knowing something confusedly (*confuse*) and knowing something distinctly (*distincte*) or determinately. The opposition as well as the term "confused" are inspired by the introductory section in the *Physics* (I, c. 1), in which Aristotle describes the process of scientific knowledge. Our intellect starts from what is better known to us, namely the "more confused" (*magis confuse*), that is, the undifferentiated whole or universal; only afterwards do we know distinctly by distinguishing the principles and elements. Scotus explains that we know something "confusedly", when we only know what is expressed by its name (*nomen*) or what it is in its universality; we know something "distinctly", when we know the proper principles put in its definition.[71] In

[70] Cf. D. Demange, *Jean Duns Scot. La théorie du savoir*, Paris 2007, pp. 413–452. T. B. Noone, "Scotus on Mind and Being: Transcendental and Developmental Psychology", in: *Acta philosophica* 18 (2009), pp. 249–282.

[71] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 72 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 49–50). Cf. Aristotle, *Physics*, I, c. 1, 184a 21–b 14.

the order of origin, confused knowledge is prior to distinct knowledge, since confused cognition takes an intermediary position between complete ignorance and distinct knowledge.[72]

The obvious conclusion seems to be that "being" is what is first known through a confused cognition. But this is not Scotus's view; on the contrary, he wants to show the incorrectness of the suggested conclusion by introducing another distinction: to know an object confusedly (*confuse*) is something other than to know a confused object (*confusum*). "Confused knowledge" concerns the mode of cognition; "knowledge of a confused object" is the cognition of an indistinct whole such as that of a genus. It is necessary to make this distinction, Scotus states, because not everything that is confused is known confusedly.[73] The main motive for his introduction of the distinction *confuse/confusum* is the knowledge of the concept of "being" (*ens*).

"Being" is an indistinct whole (*confusum*), yet is not known confusedly; it cannot even be known in this way. The reason is that being is an "irreducibly simple concept" (*conceptus simpliciter simplex*). Simple concepts are concepts that result from a simple act of apprehension, but some of them can be resolved into more simple and prior concepts, such as the concept of "man" is resolved into the concepts of a genus and a difference. Other simple concepts are irreducibly simple, incapable of further resolution (*resolutio*). "Being" is a concept that cannot be resolved into prior concepts; hence, it cannot be conceived confusedly.[74]

From Scotus's commentary on *De anima*, in which he devotes a number of questions to the inquiry into what is first known by the

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[72] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 82 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, p. 56): "(…) totus ordo confuse concipiendi prior est, et ideo primum in illo ordine est simpliciter primum". Cf. *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, nn. 78–9 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, p. 259).

[73] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 72 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 49–50). Cf. *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 69 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, p. 250).

[74] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 71 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, p. 49): "conceptus 'simpliciter simplex' est qui non est resolubilis in plures conceptus, ut conceptus entis vel ultimae differentiae. Conceptum vero simplicem sed 'non-simpliciter simplicem' voco, quicumque potest concipi ab intellectu actu simplicis intelligentiae, licet posset resolvi in plures conceptus, seorsum conceptibiles". Cf. *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 68, n. 69 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, p. 250): "Et sic ens, licet sit confusum cognitum, non tamen confuse cognoscitur, quia non habet per quod potest distingui in plura aut priora; et ideo ens non potest indistincte et confuse cognosci".

intellect, it appears that the distinction *confuse/confusum* has a polemic aim. It is the only text, in which he explicitly states that the introduction of the distinction is meant as a criticism of Thomas Aquinas, who ignored the difference in his reply to the question "Whether the more universal is first in our intellectual cognition?" (in the *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 85, a. 3).[75] Thomas argues that the imperfect knowledge by which a thing is known indistinctly, and as it were confusedly (*sub quadam confusione*), precedes the complete knowledge by which a thing is distinctly and determinately known. He identifies the confused knowledge with the knowledge of a universal without a proper cognition of each part contained in it. Since to know distinctly what is contained in the universal whole is to know the less common, Aquinas concludes that the knowledge of the more common is prior to the knowledge of the less common.

Thomas does not explicitly relate this reasoning to the most common notion of "being", but Scotus thinks the inference is inescapable that if "being" is the first known, its cognition must be an imperfect and confused knowledge. He rejects this connection of universality and cognitive priority, and considers Aquinas's model an inappropriate account of the beginning of intellectual knowledge. It is true that confused knowledge precedes distinct knowledge, but Thomas was mistaken to identify the confused knowledge of something with knowledge of a confused object, that is, the more universal.

"Being" is what is first distinctly known

Scotus comes to the conclusion that what is first distinctly known in the order of origin is what is most common (*communissimum*), namely "being" (*ens*). He adduces two arguments for this conclusion. First, nothing can distinctly be conceived, if not all elements that are contained in its essential structure are conceived. But "being" is included in all inferior quidditative concepts. Therefore nothing can be known

[75] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super secundum et tertium De anima*, q. 16, n. 27 (OP V, Washington, D.C.-St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 2006, p. 154): "Thomas faciens illud argumentum [cf. *Summa theologiae*, I, 85,3] deceptus fuit per hoc quod non distinxit inter cognoscere aliquid confuse [*add.*: et confusum] et distincte et distinctum". The first to point out the importance of this text was W. Goris in his study "The Confuse and the Distinct—Towards a Proper Starting Point of Human Knowledge in Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus", in: L. R. Friedman / J. M. Counet (eds.), *Soul and Mind, Ancient and Medieval Perspectives on the 'De anima'* [forthcoming].

distinctly without the notion of "being"; it is the prerequisite condition of any distinct knowledge. "Being", however, can only be conceived distinctly, since it is, as we have seen, an irreducibly simple concept. Hence being is "the first distinctly conceivable concept" (*primus conceptus distincte conceptibilis*).[76]

The second argument is based on the place of metaphysics in the order of sciences. According to Avicenna this discipline is the first in the order of distinct knowledge, since its task is to certify the principles of the other sciences. Metaphysics is thus concerned with what is first distinctly knowable. Because First Philosophy deals with being, being will be what is first distinctly known.[77]

In Scotus's account, the method of *resolutio* is a traditional element; Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent show the transcendentality and firstness of "being" through the reduction of our notions to a first concept that cannot be resolved into prior concepts. Typical of Scotus's position is the claim that *ens*, since it is *simpliciter simplex*, is the first *distinctly* known concept—a view that will be criticized by the Parisian master Peter Auriol (d. 1322), who denies that "being" has a distinct *ratio* (see ch. 10.1.1).

From his analysis Scotus also draws the conclusion that "being" is the first in the "habitual" cognition, which is the result of many actual intellections. He interprets Avicenna's doctrine of the primary notions which are "impressed in the soul by a first impression" in this sense of a habitual cognition.[78] Thanks to this structure the human intellect has a definite orientation and direction towards "being": every particular object is first conceived as "being".

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[76] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 80 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 54–55): "Hoc sic probo, quia (…) nihil concipitur distincte nisi quando concipiuntur omnia quae sunt in ratione eius essentiali; ens includitur in omnibus conceptibus inferioribus quiditativis; igitur nullus conceptus inferior distincte concipitur nisi concepto ente. Ens autem non potest concipi nisi distincte, quia habet conceptum simpliciter simplicem. Potest ergo concipi distincte sine aliis, et alii non sine eo distincte concepto. Ergo ens est primus conceptus distincte conceptibilis". Cf. *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 75 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, pp. 252–3).

[77] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 81 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 55–56). Cf. *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 76 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, p. 253).

[78] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, nn. 92–93 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 60–61). Cf. *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 81 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, p. 255).

"Being" is for Scotus, like for Henry of Ghent, a quidditative notion, the ultimate "what" in the resolution of concepts. He is quite reticent in determining the transcendental *ratio entis*, but in some places he advances the formula: "that to which to be is not repugnant" (*hoc… cui non repugnant esse*).[79] This non-repugnance expresses an aptitude to existence that belongs to the inner structure of a thing. The aptitude to existence, not actual existence, determines Scotus's concept of "being".

9.4.3 *The first object in the order of adequation: Negative proofs*

The question as to the first object in the order of adequation concerns the scope of the human intellect, its possibilities and boundaries. An object is said to be adequate to the intellect in two ways: by commonness (*communitas*) or by virtuality (*virtualitas*). It has the primacy of commonness, when it is essentially predicable of all that can be known by the intellect; it has the primacy of virtuality, when it has the power or *virtus* of moving the intellect to knowledge of itself and other things.[80] Scotus shows that transcendental being is the first adequate object of our intellect, first by rejecting other opinions on this issue, next (9.4.4) by solving problems inherent to the primacy of being.

God is not the first adequate object (versus: Henry of Ghent)

A first opinion that Scotus criticizes maintains that God is the first object in the order of adequation. He has Henry of Ghent as a representative of this view in mind, for Scotus paraphrases some of the arguments in Henry's *Summa*. One of them uses a statement in the second book of the *Metaphysics* (c. 1), which served in Aquinas as a crucial text for the convertibility of "being" and "true", but was read by Henry in the sense of a strict parallelism between the order of being and that of cognition: "Everything is related to being as it is related to knowledge" (993b 30–31). Just as being by participation has only

[79] Duns Scotus, *In IV Sententiarum*, d. 8, q. 1, n. 2 (ed. L. Vivès, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XVII, Paris 1894, p. 7b). Cf. *Ordinatio*, I, d. 36, q. un., n. 50 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. VI, p. 291).

[80] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super secundum et tertium De anima*, q. 21, n. 6 (OP V, p. 209). Cf. *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, nn. 126–7 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 79–80); *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 90 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, p. 259).

being through the non-participated being, it is not known unless the non-participated being is first known.[81]

Scotus's first objection departs from Henry's own observation that God is naturally first known, not through a concept proper to him but under the aspect of a transcendental attribute. Consequently, this general attribute, not God, must be the first object. Duns' second counter-argument is that God cannot be the first adequate object of our intellect, because he does not meet the conditions of such an object. God does not have a primacy "by commonness", since he is not predicated of all intelligible objects, nor does God have a primacy "by virtuality", since he does not move the intellect to knowledge of all intelligible things; experience teaches us that other things through themselves are capable of moving the intellect.[82]

"The quiddity of a material thing" is not the first adequate object (versus: Thomas Aquinas)

1. Another view Scotus discusses holds that the essence or "quiddity of a material thing" (*quiditas rei materialis*) is the adequate object of the human intellect, since there must be a proportion between the cognitive power and its object. A human being is not a purely intellectual being, but rather a composite of soul and body, and for that reason it is proper to the human intellect to abstract the quiddity or nature existing in matter from the sensible representations (phantasms).[83] The exponent of this position is not identified by name, but from the text advanced by Scotus in support of this stand it is evident that he means no less a person than Thomas Aquinas. In a later *adnotatio* to the exposition his name is also explicitly mentioned.[84]

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[81] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, nn. 108–109 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 68–69). Cf. Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 24, q. 8 (ed. L. Badius, Paris 1520, fol. 145P).

[82] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, nn. 126–127 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 79–80).

[83] *Ibid.*, nn. 110–112 (pp. 69–70).

[84] *Ibid.*, n. 124 (pp. 76–77). Scotus's characterization of Aquinas's position follows the argumentation in the *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 85, a.1. For a more extensive analysis of Scotus's criticism, J. A. Aertsen, "Aquinas and the Human Desire for Knowledge", in: *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 79 (2005), pp. 411–430.

Scotus's criticism is extremely severe: Thomas's thought rests on a "false foundation" (*fundamentum falsum*).[85] He divides his critique into a theological and a philosophical part. The *theological* critique shows the consequences that the eschatological perspective of Christian revelation has for the scope of the intellect. The *Doctor subtilis* cannot imagine that a "Catholic thinker" or theologian maintains the view that the adequate object of the human intellect is the quiddity of a material thing, for such a view contradicts Christian faith. Scripture teaches us that in the life to come we shall see God as he is (1 John 3,2)—in other words, that the human intellect will know the essence of an immaterial substance. "A power, remaining the same, cannot know something that is not contained under its first, adequate object".[86] Therefore this object must be more encompassing than Thomas's model allows for. He could argue, Scotus recognizes, that the intellect is elevated by God's grace to knowledge of the immaterial substances. But this consideration would not eliminate Thomas's problem, since what is by nature the first adequate object of a power cannot be changed or exceeded by a later knowledge, even if it is granted by grace.[87]

The essence of Scotus's *philosophical* objections concerns the knowledge of being as being and suggests that Aquinas's position has fatal consequences for the possibility of metaphysics. This science is only possible, if the intellect conceives something under a more general aspect than Thomas holds, namely under the aspect of being in general (*ens in communi*). Otherwise metaphysics would not be a *scientia transcendens* to a greater extent than physics. The adequate object of the intellect cannot be anything that is more particular than being-as-being (*ens inquantum ens*), since then being in itself could in no way

[85] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, n. 119 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, p. 73). As to the question of whether his interpretation of Thomas is correct, see our analysis in ch. 6.4.2.

[86] *Ibid.*, n. 113 (p. 70): "Contra: istud non potest sustineri a theologo, quia intellectus, exsistens eadem potentia naturaliter, cognoscet per se quiditatem substantiae immaterialis, sicut patet secundum fidem de anima beata. Potentia autem manens eadem non potest habere actum circa aliquid quod non continetur sub suo primo obiecto". The parallel text in the *Lectura* does not speak of a "theologian", but of *aliquis catholicus*: *Lectura*, I, dist. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 40 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, 240).

[87] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, n. 114 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, p. 71).

be understood by us.[88] Scotus uses the phrase *scientia transcendens* by which he, in his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, explains the name of this discipline. Metaphysics, as the science of what is transcendental, requires that the adequate object of the intellect be transcendental.

2. Scotus's objections make it clear that he regards being in general as the first adequate object of the intellect. But he adds a self-critical *additio* as well as a *dubium* with respect to his own conception.[89] "There remains a doubt", he observes. If being according to its most common character is the first object, why cannot everything that is contained under being naturally move our intellect to knowledge? God and all immaterial substances then seem to be naturally knowable to us—a view rejected by Scotus in his discussion of Henry of Ghent's position.[90]

In his reply, Scotus introduces a distinction that is typical of his way of thought. One should define the first object of a power in terms of what is adequate to its *nature*, not to a particular *state* of that power (*status*). Thus, we do not say that the adequate object of sight is what it sees by candle light, but what it sees according to the nature of its power. For the human intellect, considered according to the nature of its power, that which is most common, "being", is the first commensurate object. Yet for the intellect in its present *state* (*pro statu isto*) the "quiddity of a sensible thing" is the adequate object that moves to knowledge. Therefore, the intellect in the present state will only know what is contained under this object.[91] For the dependency of the intel-

[88] *Ibid.*, n. 117 (pp. 72–73); n. 118 (p. 73): "Praeterea, tertio, et redit quasi in idem cum secundo: quidquid per se cognoscitur a potentia cognitiva, vel est eius obiectum primum, vel continetur sub eius obiecto primo; ens ut ens est communius sensibili, per se intelligitur a nobis, alias metaphysica non esset magis scientia transcendens quam physica; igitur non potest aliquid esse primum obiectum intellectus nostri quod sit particularius ente, quia tunc ens in se nullo modo intelligeretur a nobis".

[89] The self-critical *additio* in *ibid.*, nn. 123–124 (pp. 76–77), the *dubium* nn. 185–188 (p. 113–115).

[90] *Ibid.*, n. 185 (p. 112): "Sed restat unum dubium. Si ens secundum suam rationem communissimam sit primum obiectum intellectus, quare non potest quodcumque contentum sub ente naturaliter movere intellectum, sicut fuit argutum in prima ratione ad primam quaestionem: et tunc videtur quod Deus naturaliter posset cognosci a nobis, et substantiae omnes immateriales, quod negatum est".

[91] *Ibid.*, n. 186 (pp. 112–113): "Respondeo. Obiectum primum potentiae assignatur illud quod adaequatum est potentiae ex ratione potentiae, non autem quod adaequatur potentiae in aliquo statu: quemadmodum primum obiectum visus non ponitur illud quod adaequatur visui exsistenti in medio illuminato a candela, praecise, sed quod

lect on sense experience in the present state Scotus suggests two possible reasons: it is either the punishment for original sin (Augustine's view) or the divinely ordained harmony of the intellectual and sense faculties.[92]

Scotus's reply to the *dubium* restricts once more the possibilities of human reason. He himself observes that the Aristotelian-Thomistic position and his own stance agree in that the adequate object of the intellect in its present state is the quiddity of a sensible thing, in which the most common determination of "being" is also included.[93] Nevertheless, there remains a crucial difference, insofar as Thomas's conception concerns human intellectual knowledge in its present *state* and ignores the theological distinction between the "nature" and the "state" of a power. The adequate object of the intellect, which is commensurate with the *nature* of its power, is being as being.[94]

Verum *is not the first adequate object*

Having established that neither divine being nor material being is the first adequate object of the intellect, Scotus wonders whether a *transcendens* other than "being", which has the same commonness, namely

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natum est adaequari visui ex se, quantum est ex natura visus. Nunc autem (…) nihil potest adaequari intellectui nostro ex natura potentiae in ratione primi obiecti nisi communissimum; tamen et pro statu isto adaequatur in ratione motivi quiditas rei sensibilis, et ideo pro statu isto non naturaliter intelliget alia quae non continentur sub isto primo motivo".

[92] *Ibid.*, n. 187 (p. 113).

[93] *Ibid.*, n. 123 (p. 76): "Concordant hic Aristoteles et 'articulus', quod quiditas rei sensibilis est nunc obiectum adaequatum, intelligendo 'sensibilis' proprie, vel inclusi essentialiter vel virtualiter in sensibili. (…) Non igitur nunc est adaequatum obiectum eius quod supremae sensitivae, quia intelligit omne inclusum in sensibili essentialiter, usque ad ens, sub qua indifferentia nullo modo sensus cognoscit".

[94] *Ibid.*, n. 124 (p. 76): "Discordat:—obiectum adaequatum 'intellectui ex natura potentiae' nihil sub ente. Hoc 'articulus' contra Aristotelem, et bene contra Thomam hic prima ratio". The consequences of the theological grounding of this position for Scotus's conception of metaphysics has been differently assessed. Cf. E. Gilson, *Jean Duns Scot. Introduction à ses positions fondamentales*, Paris 1952 (Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale, 42), ch. 1 ("On the object of metaphysics"). A. B. Wolter, "The theologism of Duns Scotus", in: *Franciscan Studies* 7 (1947), pp. 253–273 and pp. 367–398. B. C. Bazán, "Conceptions on the Agent Intellect and the Limits of Metaphysics", in: J. A. Aertsen / K. Emery / A. Speer (eds.), *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277. Philosophie und Theologie an der Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin – New York 2001 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 28), pp. 178–214, in particular pp. 204–209.

the true (*verum*), is this object.[95] The discussion of this position is a recognition of the special place the true has acquired in the medieval doctrine of the transcendentals. The arguments advanced in support of the primacy of *verum* illustrate this fact.

The first argument recalls that the human faculties of intellect and will have the same transcendental scope, but are distinguished on the basis of their different formal objects, *verum* and *bonum* respectively. Such a distinction was made, for instance, by Thomas Aquinas (see ch. 6.1): through the formal characteristic (*ratio*) of knowability being is the object of the intellect as "the true", through the formal characteristic of appetibility it is the object of the will as "the good". Another argument refers to Henry of Ghent's account of the transcendentals (in his *Summa*, a. 34, q. 3), in which "the true" has a certain priority to "being" (see ch. 7.1). The intelligibility of a thing requires another *ratio* than that of being; that by which being is related to the intellect is the *ratio* of true. While denying that *verum* is *obiective* the first, Henry acknowledges the primacy of the true *dispositive*.[96]

Scotus rejects the view that the true under the aspect of true (*sub ratione veri*) is the first adequate object of the intellect. One of his counter-arguments establishes that the intellect is able to understand the good (*bonum*) according to its proper *ratio* of the good as distinct from the true. But all that is understood is understood under the formal aspect of the object of the intellect. Consequently, *verum* is not the first adequate object.[97] Another objection argues that the primacy of the true is impossible, for it is a property of being (*passio entis*) and thus posterior to being. When the intellect understands a stone under the aspect of true, it does not have quidditative knowledge of a stone, since the *ratio* of the true does not include, as "being" does, the quid-

[95] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, nn. 167–184 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 104–112); n. 167 (p. 104): "His visis de ente, restat ulterior dubitatio,—utrum posset poni aliquod aliud transcendens primum obiectum intellectus, quod videtur habere aequalem communitatem cum ente. Et ponitur quod sic, et hoc quod 'verum' sit primum obiectum intellectus et non ens". Cf. *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 134–143 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, pp. 277–281); *Quaestiones super secundum et tertium De anima*, q. 20 (OP V, pp. 197–205); *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, VI, q. 3, nn. 7–22 (OP IV, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997, pp. 58–65).

[96] Cf. Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, nn. 168–169 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 104–105).

[97] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, VI, q. 3, nn. 17–19 (OP IV, pp. 62–63).

dity of a thing. "True" cannot be predicated essentially of all objects of the intellect, but only denominatively.[98]

9.4.4 *The primacy of "being" in the order of adequation and the problem of its univocal predication*

From his critical assessments of other views on the first adequate object of our intellect, Scotus draws the conclusion that there is no such object on the basis of a primacy of virtuality alone. The discussion with Henry of Ghent's position has made clear that there is not one single object, the divine being, which moves the human intellect to knowledge; on the contrary, there are many different objects that are knowable in virtue of themselves. Thus, if there is a first adequate object, it can only be first because of its commonness (*propter communitatem*).[99]

The entire preceding exposition suggests that only transcendental being can be this object, but Scotus raises a formidable obstacle to the obvious conclusion. He argues that being cannot be predicated univocally or *in quid* of all *per se* intelligible objects and, consequently, cannot be the adequate object of the intellect by commonness.[100] This conclusion is a critical point in Scotus's doctrine. The transcendentality of being, its univocal predicability and cognitive firstness are jeopardized.

The problem of the univocal predication of "being"

1. Scotus distinguishes between the univocal concept of being and its univocal predication—a distinction that constitutes the second part of his doctrine of univocity. He has proven in the first part that being is a univocal concept common to all that is, but this does not mean that it is univocally predicated of all things. Univocal predication concerns the *ratio* of the predicate in relation to that of the subject and is identified by Scotus with predication *in quid*. When elucidating, in his

[98] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, n. 172 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, p. 106); *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 138 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, p. 279).

[99] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, n. 129 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, p. 80).

[100] *Ibid.*, n. 131 (p. 81).

commentary on Porphyry's *Introduction*, the number of predicables, he explains this mode of predicating.

The two basic modes into which predication is divided are *in quid* and *in quale*. The division is inspired by Porphyry himself, who related it to the replies to the questions "what a thing is" and "how it is". Predication *in quid* occurs when the predicate belongs to the essence of the subject in the manner of a subsistent part; what is predicated is either the determinable part of the essence of the subject (the *genus*) or the entire essence (the *species*). The *in quale* predication is merely denominative and occurs in two manners: either it predicates an essential qualification of the subject (the *differentia*) or a non-essential one; when this note is convertible with the subject, it is its *proprium*.[101]

Scotus extends the distinction between *in quid* and *in quale* predication to the transcendental level, which leads to a certain homogenizing of the transcendental terms with the predicables. As we have seen, he adds two *universalia transcendentia* to the five Porphyrian predicables; one of them is predicated *in quid*, as "being", the other is predicated *in quale*, as "one".[102] This extension prompted Scotus, however, to a recognition of the limits of the univocal predication of being.

2. Scotus's first conclusion is that being cannot be predicated *in quid* of the ultimate differences. The predicative relation of being and difference was the basis of Aristotle's negative claim that "being is not a genus", which was interpreted by the medievals as expressing the transcendentality of the predicate. Being is not a genus, it was argued, for no difference participates in the essence of a genus, but being is included in the concept of any difference. Scotus offers another understanding of the relation of being to difference, but commentators have disagreed over what sort of differences he had in mind. Scotus's notion of "ultimate differences" has been interpreted in a broad sense as including the transcendental differences contracting being, the ultimate specific differences and the individuating differences. Yet Scotus himself takes the notion more narrowly; he does not refer to the disjunctive transcendentals as "differences" of being, but as its "intrinsic

[101] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in librum Porphyrii Isagoge*, q. 12, nn. 15–16 (OP I, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1999, pp. 57–59).

[102] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, IV, q. 1, n. 51 (OP III, p. 308).

modes". Contemporaries construe his arguments to be concerned only with ultimate *specific* differences.[103]

Scotus presents two proofs that being cannot be predicated *in quid* of the ultimate differences. The first rests on the idea that last differences are not resolvable into further differences but are wholly or primarily diverse (*primo diversa*). Differences, however, that essentially include being are not wholly diverse, since they hold a common element, being, and another element by which they differ. If all differences include being, no difference will be ultimate and the process of resolution will go on infinitely, which is impossible. Hence, the analysis finally reaches some difference that does not essentially contain being, since it is ultimate.[104]

Scotus's second proof is based on an analogy between the resolution in the real order and in the conceptual order. Just as in the real order a composite being is made up of potency and act, so too is a composite concept made up of a determinable and a determining concept. The resolution of a composite being ultimately ends with two irreducibly simple elements (*simpliciter simplicia*), namely its ultimate act and its ultimate potency. These two components are wholly diverse (*primo diversa*) and therefore have nothing in common—what is ultimate act does not include anything potential. The same holds for the resolution in the conceptual order: every composite concept can be resolved into two irreducibly simple concepts, namely a purely determinable (*quid*) and a purely determining (*quale*). These concepts are wholly diverse and contain nothing of the other, for one is ultimate in the order of determination, the other in the order of determinability. The purely determinable concept is the concept of "being", the purely determining the concept of the ultimate difference. The latter concept thus does not include "being".[105] Therefore, being cannot be predicated *in quid* of ultimate differences.

3. Scotus's second conclusion is that being cannot be predicated *in quid* of its proper attributes (*passiones propriae*). This conclusion

[103] Cf. A. B. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, pp. 82–87. L. Honnefelder, *Ens inquantum ens*, pp. 318–321. S. D. Dumont, "The Univocity of the Concept of Being in the Fourteenth Century: John Duns Scotus and William of Alnwick", in: *Mediaeval Studies* 49 (1987), pp. 1–75, p. 20, n. 63.

[104] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, n. 132 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 81–82).

[105] *Ibid.*, n. 133 (pp. 82–83).

immediately touches his doctrine of the transcendentals, for the proper attributes of being, which are convertible with it, are the one, the true and the good. From the beginning of the doctrine the relations between being and the other transcendentals, their identity and difference, were interpreted according to the scheme of *subiectum* and *passio* (or *proprium*), but not without some restrictions. There was awareness that the Porphyrian model of the predicables is not simply applicable to the transcendental level, insofar as the property adds a qualification to the subject that is *really* distinct from it. Scotus, however, logically applies the predicative structure of subject and proper attribute to the relation of being to the convertible transcendentals.

He quotes the *Posterior Analytics* (I, c. 4), in which Aristotle distinguishes two modes of *per se* predication in order to clarify the various relations of subject and predicate. When something is said *per se* in the first mode (*primo modo*), the predicate is either the whole (species) or a part (genus or difference) of the essential structure or definition of the subject. A property is also predicated necessarily (*per se*) of the subject, but *secundo modo*, because the subject does not contain the predicate essentially. A proper attribute cannot be defined without reference to its subject, but the subject enters the definition of its property as "something added" or extrinsic. Applying the Aristotelian analysis to "being" and the transcendental attributes, Scotus concludes that being only enters the formal *ratio* of its attribute as something added and thus cannot be predicated *in quid* of them.[106]

Scotus's solution: The double primacy of "being"

From the proofs that being cannot essentially be predicated of all that is of itself intelligible, it follows that there is no first adequate object by reason of commonness, since nothing is more common than being. Scotus had earlier established that there is no first adequate object on the basis of a primacy of virtuality. It seems that in the order of adequation our intellect does not have a first object at all.

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[106] *Ibid.*, n. 134 (p. 83). Cf. *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 102 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVI, pp. 262–263): "Secundo dico quod ens non praedicatur in 'quid' de passionibus suis, ita quod non includatur essentialiter in ratione 'veri', 'unius' et 'boni', quia nulla passio includit essentialiter suum subiectum, cum passio praedicetur de subiecto 'secundo modo dicendi per se', et subiectum cadit in definitione passionis sicut 'additum' (…); cum igitur verum, bonum, unum sint passiones entis, non includunt essentialiter ipsum ens".

Scotus, however, presents an ingenious solution of the difficulty. It is true that being cannot be the first adequate object of the intellect according to commonness alone or according to virtuality alone. Yet being is the first adequate object, because a twofold primacy (*duplex primitas*) concurs in it: with respect to some intelligible objects being has a primacy by way of commonness and with respect to others a primacy of virtuality. The *prima intelligibilia* that include essentially the *ratio* of being are the genera, species, individuals and the uncreated being. All other intelligible objects are either (i) contained virtually in the *ratio* of being, such as the convertible transcendental attributes, or (ii) virtually or essentially included in something else, which itself essentially includes being, namely, the ultimate differences.[107] Scotus's solution is ingenious, but questionable in some respects. His notion, for instance, of the "virtual primacy" of being gives rise to a problem. How can a notion that is irreducibly simple virtually include the transcendental properties?

Is Scotus's doctrine of univocity consistent? Even his disciples were critical of the distinction between the univocity of being and its univocal predication and answered this question negatively. William of Alnwick (d. 1333), for instance, plainly rejects Scotus's distinction; it is inconsistent to hold that being is a univocal predicate and then to deny its univocal predication of all things. He does not accept Scotus's argument that being cannot be predicated *in quid* of its proper attributes. The argument presupposes that the Aristotelian model of subject and property is applicable to being and the other transcendentals. But being cannot have a property that is really distinct from it, because that property would then be nothing. A transcendental property differs from being only by reason (*sola ratione*).[108] Alnwick returns to the thirteenth-century view of the difference between being and the other transcendentals.

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[107] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3, n. 137 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, pp. 85–86); n. 151 (pp. 93–94).

[108] William of Alnwick, *In I Sententiarum*, q. 8 (ed. S. D. Dumont, in: *Mediaeval Studies* 49 (1987), p. 53, ll. 518–527), in particular: "(…) dicendum quod ens non potest habere passionem realiter differentem a se, quia illa passio tunc esset nihil. Unde loquendo de passione quae causatur ex principiis subiecti, sic entis non est passio. Et ideo passio entis sola ratione differt ab ente".

9.5 Being and transcendental differences

In every doctrine of the transcendentals the question as to the identity and difference of the other attributes with "being", the first transcendental, is crucial. With respect to the traditional group of the (simple) convertible properties "one", "true" and "good", Scotus explains their differences from "being" and from one another through another kind of distinction than the one that was current in the doctrine (9.5.1). His new class of disjunctive transcendentals sharpened the problem of the differences of being. How should the contraction of the univocally common concept of being through the disjunctive properties be understood, if the model of genus and difference is not appropriate (9.5.2)?

9.5.1 *The (simple) convertible transcendentals: Formal distinction*

The convertibility of "being" and "one"

In his basic account Scotus does not discuss the relation of the coextensive transcendental attributes to "being", but in other texts he does, most extensively the relation between "being" and "one". He deals with it in his commentary on book IV of Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* the usual place for medieval reflections on the relation between being and one. Some sections of his exposition are worked out at length while others are scarcely more than rough sketches. Scotus's account can be divided into two main parts.

In reference to Aristotle's text, the first part raises the question: "Do being and one signify the same nature?" (*Utrum ens et unum significant eandem naturam*). Scotus discusses the Philosopher's arguments for their identity in close connection with the controversy in Arab thought between Avicenna and Averroes about the nature of the one and presents his own solution to the question.[109] He introduces the second main part of his exposition with the observation that "this question on one and being" involves a number of "difficulties".[110] He enumerates four of them, of which the last difficulty is more extensively discussed than the others: "Whether 'the one' when it is *transcendens*

[109] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, IV, q. 2, nn. 12–76 (OP III, pp. 323–338).
[110] *Ibid.*, nn. 77–160 (pp. 338–360).

expresses some other thing (*res*) than 'being' ". This *dubium* is, as Scotus remarks, common to all transcendentals.[111] If "one", "true" and "good" are convertible with "being", the problem is how their differences are to be thought of. If there is no difference at all, it would be a useless repetition of the same (*nugatio*) to say that every being is one, true and good. If, however, one, true and good add a *res* to being, they would no longer be convertible with being and would lose their transcendental character. In his reply, Scotus introduces a new solution to this problem, the idea of "unitive containment" (*continentia unitiva*), and concludes the *quaestio* with a separate treatment of this notion.[112]

From the structure of the *quaestio* it appears that Scotus focuses on two problems which both concern the identity and non-identity of being and one. Although his analysis is restricted to these two notions and is determined by the peculiarities of their history, Scotus's conclusions are representative of his understanding of the convertible transcendentals in general—a somewhat neglected aspect in the study of his doctrine.[113]

The point of departure of Scotus's *quaestio* is Aristotle's statement "Being and the one are the same and one single nature" (*Metaphysics*, IV, c. 2, 1003b 22), which suggests an essential identity. The real center of the discussion, however, is Avicenna's view, whose claim of the accidentality of the one seems to question an essential identity of being and one. In contrast to the critical attitude towards Avicenna in the *Metaphysics* commentaries of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas (see ch. 2.4.2), Scotus's assessment is much more positive; sympathy for Avicenna's position runs like a thread through his entire treatment of the *quaestio*.

Scotus presents the *opinio Avicennae* by means of four arguments which are in fact the reasons Averroes had adduced in explanation of Avicenna's wrong position (see ch. 2.4.2): (i) "Being" and "one",

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[111] *Ibid.*, nn. 110–160 (pp. 347–360).

[112] *Ibid.*, nn. 161–176 (pp. 360–363).

[113] On the convertible transcendentals, A. B. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, pp. 100–127. Cf. on the "one", J. A. Aertsen, "Being and One: The Doctrine of the Convertible Transcendentals in Duns Scotus", in: *Franciscan Studies* 56 (1998) [= G. A. Wilson / T. B. Noone (eds.), *Essays in Honor of Girard Etzkorn*], pp. 47–64; on the "good", J. Uscatescu Barrón, "Zu Duns Scotus' Bestimmung des transzendentalen Guten als Hinsicht", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, Berlin – New York 2003 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 30), pp. 269–284. The basic text on "truth" is: *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, VI, q. 3 (OP IV, pp. 57–88).

although predicated of all things, are not identical according to their nature, but to their subjects. The reason for this is that if the "one" were essentially the same as "being", then that which is many would be not-being, inasmuch as the many, as many, is not one. (ii) It would be "nugatory" (*nugatio*) to say "one being" if there were an essential identity between the two terms. The expression *nugatio* does not occur in the *Avicenna latinus* but is borrowed from Averroes.[114] (iii) If the "one" signifies the same as "being", then it would be predicated *in quid* of being. That, however, is not the case; the one is said denominatively of being, that is, as a qualification of the essence of the subject. That the one is not predicated *in quid* of being Scotus demonstrates in the following way. When the one and being are taken abstractly, that is, abstracted from the subject, then the proposition "*unitas est entitas*" (or the reverse) appears to be false, for "indivision" belongs to the concept of "unity", but not to the concept of "entity". Hence they are not identical. (iv) Every unity belongs to the category of quantity. Therefore the one is not convertible with being.[115]

Scotus's further procedure in the *quaestio* is that he discusses Aristotle's arguments for the convertibility from Avicenna's perspective (*sustinendo opinionem Avicennae*); adduces objections to Avicenna's arguments; formulates answers to these objections; and finally presents his own solution by concluding that being and one are not simply convertible. He explains this conclusion by referring to Avicenna's first argument. If the one were identical with being according to its essence, the many, as many, would be not-being (*non-ens*).[116]

As an objection to this argument, Scotus had put forward that its consequence would be the denial of the convertibility between being and the one, which conflicts, however, with Avicenna's statement that "being and the one are on a par (*parificantur*) in predication".[117] In his reply Scotus stresses that the Arab philosopher does recognize

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[114] Averroes, *In IV Metaphysicorum*, comm. 3, (in: *Aristotelis Opera cum Averrois Commentariis*, Vol. VIII, Venice 1562–1574 [reprinted in Frankfurt am Main 1962], fol. 67rC): "Et iste homo [Avicenna] ratiocinatur ad suam opinionem, dicendo quod, si unum et ens significant idem, tunc dicere ens est unum esset nugatio, quasi dicere unum est unum, aut ens est ens".

[115] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, IV, q. 2, nn. 12–21 (OP III, pp. 323–325).

[116] *Ibid.*, n. 66 (p. 335): "Dicendum est ad quaestionem, quod non convertuntur propter rationem tactam, quae (…) fuit prima pro opinione Avicennae".

[117] *Ibid.*, n. 41 (p. 330): "Contra primam rationem: sequitur ex illa quod ens et unum non convertuntur. Hoc haberi potest ex prima ratione pro opinione sua: quia

convertibility, but not an "essential" convertibility. Avicenna's point is that the "one" and "being" are not "essentially" (*essentialiter*) identical, since otherwise it would be a *nugatio* to say "one being" (his second argument), and "one" would be predicated of being *in quid* and not denominatively (his third argument). In his interpretation of Avicenna, Scotus distinguishes two types of convertibility. The type that Avicenna recognizes with respect to being and the one presupposes not an essential identity but an identity according to the subject.[118] This type of convertibility means that "being" and the "one" are related to each other as *subiectum* and *passio*.

This conclusion provides the key for Scotus's positive evaluation of Avicenna's view of the nature of the one. He interprets the relation of being to the transcendentals convertible with it according to the model of a "subject" and its "properties" (*propria*) in a stricter manner than the thirteenth-century commentators. The property is supposed to be not only conceptually but *really* distinct from the subject. In his discussion of the first adequate object of the intellect (see 9.4.4), Scotus therefore concludes that "being" cannot be predicated *in quid* of its proper transcendental attributes "one", "true" and "good", since the subject is not essentially included in the *ratio* of the property. He apparently considers Avicenna as an ally in this view.

But how is the transcendentality of the one to be reconciled with Avicenna's (fourth) argument that the one belongs "to a determinate category"? Scotus subscribes to this argument. Being and the one are related to each other as *subiectum* and *passio*. No substance is ever the *passio* of another substance or of itself. The property is therefore an accident. "I concede that the one belongs to a determinate category, namely, to that of quantity". For all that, Scotus maintains that the transcendental character of the one is not thereby eliminated. He endeavors to clarify this by making a comparison with the notion of *creatio*. "Creation" in the passive sense signifies the createdness of things, which belongs to everything that is not God. Creation is therefore a property of being, but still belongs to a determinate category, that of relation. In the same way, the "one" can be of a determinate

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non praedicantur de eisdem. Contradicit sibi ipsi, quia dicit in VII Metaphysicae a [c. 1]: 'Ens et unum parificantur in praedicatione' ".

[118] *Ibid.*, n. 56 (p. 333): "Ad rationes contra opinionem Avicennae, dicendum quod concedit convertibilitatem, non essentialem, sed quod idem sunt subiecto, non secundum essentiam".

category and still belong (*simpliciter* or *secundum quid*) to the whole of being.[119]

One may wonder whether Scotus's reasoning is really satisfactory. According to his own definition, *transcendens* is that which does not fall under a category. Strikingly, Scotus advances a different conception of the relation of creation elsewhere. Everything that belongs to being before it is divided into the categories is *transcendens*. The relation of creation is of this sort, for it belongs to every being before it descends into the categories. The relation of creation does not belong to a particular category but is a *relatio transcendens*—Scotus is the first to use this expression.[120]

Real identity and formal difference

How the non-identity of being and its transcendental properties has to be understood is made clear in the second main part of Scotus's *quaestio*, which concerns the difficulty: "Does the transcendental 'one' express some other *res* than 'being'?" Arguments *pro* are, of course, drawn from Avicenna, who argues that the "one" has the character of an accident, signifying a disposition added to being. It therefore seems that the "one" expresses another reality than "being". With respect to this position Scotus makes two interesting remarks. First, he defends Avicenna against the sharp criticism of Averroes. One must not attribute to Avicenna the view of a "real diversity" (*diversitas realis*) between being and the one, as Averroes appears to do. Avicenna's statements about the accidentality of the one must be understood in the light of his definition of "accident": "all that is *per se* outside the concept of the essence". He means to say that such a property is not actually included in the quiddity, but rather presupposes the quiddity. Scotus subsequently adds a remark that expresses a cautious distance from Avicenna's position: "This may not necessarily mean that these

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[119] *Ibid.*, n. 70 (p. 336): "Concedo tunc quod omne unum est determinati generis, scilicet quantitatis. Sicut enim omne aliud a Deo dicitur creatum, ita quod creatio-passio est proprietas entis, et tamen creatio est unius generis, ut relationis, et determinata species in illo genere, sic unum potest esse determinati generis et tamen convenire toti enti simpliciter vel secundum quid. (…) Unde hoc nihil concludit contra Avicennam".

[120] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d. 1, n. 277 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. VII, Vatican 1973, pp. 137–38); *Reportata Parisiensia*, II, d. 1, q. 6, n. 16 (ed. L. Vivès, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXII, Paris 1893, p. 555b); *Lectura*, II, d. 1, n. 261 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVIII, Vatican 1982, p. 89).

properties are accidents, but that they are unitively contained (*unitive contenta*)".[121] He thereby introduces the notion that will serve as the model for his solution to the problem of the identity and difference.

Scotus then explains the "real identity" (*identitas realis*) which is implicit in the notion of *continentia unitiva* but which leaves room for a real non-identity. Just as the divine essence contains infinite perfections and contains all of them unitively so that they are not other things (*res*), likewise a created essence can contain unitively some perfections. There is, of course, a fundamental difference between the unitive containment in the divine essence and in created essence. Each perfection in God is infinite and cannot therefore be said to be a part of one total perfection. In creatures, each contained perfection is limited, and more so than the containing essence considered according to its totality. Thus each perfection can be said to be a part of perfection, not, however, as really distinct (*realiter differens*) so that it is another nature, but as just another perfection, by an otherness (*alietas*) not caused by the intellect. This difference is not as great as the one we understand when we speak of "diverse things" but is a minor real difference (*differentia realis minor*), if we call every difference not caused by the intellect a "real difference".[122]

Scotus traces the origin of the notion of "unitive containment" to the work *De divinis nominibus* of Dionysius the Areopagite.[123] The passage he has in mind is the fifth chapter, where it is said that "in

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[121] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, IV, q. 2, n. 142 (OP III, p. 354): "Nota etiam quod opinionem istam de diversitate reali non oportet imponere Avicennae, licet Averroes videatur ei imponere. Quaecumque enim dicit Avicenna III Metaphysicae suae vel VII de hac materia, exponi possunt: quod accidens est quidquid est extra per se intellectum quiditatis, sicut ipse loquitur in suo V: 'quiditas est tantum quiditas, nec universalis, nec particularis' etc., hoc est, nullum istorum actu includitur in intellectu quiditatis, sed quasi prius naturaliter praesupponit quiditatem. Sed hoc non necessario forte ponit quod sint accidentia, sed unitive contenta".

[122] *Ibid.*, n. 143 (pp. 354–355): "Sustineri ergo potest illa opinio de identitate reali sic: quod sicut essentia divina infinitas perfectiones continet et omnes unitive, sic quod non sunt alia res, sic essentia creata potest alias perfectiones unitive continere. Tamen in Deo quaelibet est infinita; et ideo proprie non potest dici pars unius totalis perfectionis (…). In creatura quaelibet perfectio contenta limitata est, et limitatior essentia continente secundum totalitatem considerata. Ideo quaelibet potest dici pars perfectionis, non tamen realiter differens quod sit alia natura, sed alia perfectio realis—alietate, inquam, non causata ab intellectu, nec tamen tanta quantam intelligimus cum dicimus 'diversae res'; sed differentia reali minori, si vocetur differentia realis omnis non causata ab intellectu".

[123] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* II, d. 16, q. un., n. 17 (ed. L. Vivès, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XIII, Paris 1893, p. 43a).

the divine goodness are being itself, the principles of beings, all beings and whatever contains being (*esse continentia*); and they are in it in an irrepressible, comprehensive and unitive way (*unitive*)".[124] Dionysius wants to make clear that all beings are in God, not, however, as they are in created things, where they possess diversity and plurality, but unitively. From the Dionysian idea Scotus framed the notion of "unitive containment".

The concept of *continentia unitiva* connects a real identity with what Scotus calls a "minor real difference", and it is this connection that forms the attraction of this model.[125] By a "minor real difference" he means a kind of intermediate distinction between a merely "rational" difference, the work of reason alone, and a fully "real" difference. Perfections that are unitively contained are not altogether identical, for these are not united but are one. Union presupposes some distinction. Perfections unitively contained are neither really distinct in the sense that they are different *res,* because these are contained *multipliciter* or *dispersim.* But Scotus recognizes different degrees of real distinction. The "minor real difference" presupposed by unitive containment is a "real" distinction, insofar as the difference is not constituted by the intellect, but found in the thing (*ex parte rei*) prior to any act of the intellect. It is a "minor real difference", because it is not a distinction between two things but a distinction between what Scotus calls "formalities" (*formalitates*) or "realities" (*realitates*) within one and the same thing. The "formal" distinction is meant to provide an objective basis for our diverse concepts of the same thing.[126]

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[124] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De divinibus nominibus*, c. 5, n. 6 (ed. B. R. Suchla, in: *Corpus Dionysiacum*, Vol. 1, Berlin – New York 1990 (Patristische Texte und Studien 33), p. 184) in the translation of Robert Grosseteste (ed. Ph. Chevalier, in: *Dionysiaca*, Vol. I, Paris – Bruges 1937, p. 343): "Et est ex ipsa, et in ipsa, et ipsum esse, et entium principia et entia omnia, et qualitercumque esse continentia, et haec irretentive et convolute et unitive".

[125] Concerning *continentia unitiva* there are three important texts: *Ordinatio*, II, d. 16, q. un., nn. 17–18 (ed. Vivès, Vol. XIII, pp. 43–44); IV, d. 43, q. 3, n. 5 (ed. Vivès, Vol. XX, Paris 1894, p. 448a–b); *Reportata Parisiensia*, II, d. 1, q. 6, n. 14 (ed. Vivès, Vol. XXII, p. 554a–b).

[126] Cf. M. J. Grajewski, *The Formal Distinction of Duns Scotus. A Study in Metaphysics*, Washington, D. C., 1944 (The Catholic University of America: Philosophical Studies, 90), pp. 124–137 (for the connection of "unitive containment" with the formal distinction); A. B. Wolter, "The Formal Distinction", in: J. K. Ryan / B. M. Bonansea (eds.), *John Duns Scotus, 1265–1965*, pp. 45–60 [reprinted in: id., *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus*, Ithaca-London 1990, pp. 27–41]; M. McCord Adams,

The "formal" distinction *ex natura rei* was seen by followers and critics as a typically Scotist doctrine, because the "Subtle Doctor" applies it to a wide range of issues.[127] He interprets, for instance, the non-identity between the divine attributes as a formal distinction, and this theological application was vehemently contested since it seems to entail a real non-identity in the divine. Other problems to which Scotus applies this distinction are the relation between genera and their specific differences and the relation between being and the convertible transcendentals.

"Being" unitively contains the properties "one", "true" and "good", which means that they are not different things (*res*) from being; yet they are distinct from being and from one another by a real formality.[128] Scotus's answer to the difficulty as to whether the transcendental "one" expresses some other *res* than "being" is thus affirmative, provided that "thing" is understood in the sense of a "reality" or "formality".

Scotus develops a new model for the relation between being and the convertible transcendentals. There must be not only a real identity, *but also* a real non-identity in the sense of a formal distinction. He gives a metaphysical reason for the introduction of this new model. If the other transcendentals were not distinct from being by a real formality, he argues, and then metaphysics, which considers these properties of being, would no longer be a real science.[129] The *scientia transcendens* can only remain a *scientia realis*, if the differences between the convertible transcendentals are more than mental constructions.

It has been suggested that there is an intrinsic connection between transcendentality and "formal being" in the sense that the transcendentals

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"Ockham on Identity and Distinction", in: *Franciscan Studies* 36 (1976), pp. 5–74 (on Scotus, pp. 25–43).

[127] Cf. W. Hübener, "Robertus Anglicus O.F.M. und die formalistische Tradition", in: J. P. Beckmann / L. Honnef elder / G. Schrimpf / G. Wieland (eds.), *Philosophie im Mittelalter. Entwicklungslinien und Paradigmen*, Hamburg 1987, pp. 329–353. M. J. F. M. Hoenen, "*Formalitates phantasticae*. Bewertungen des Skotismus im Mittelalter", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen*, pp. 337–357.

[128] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d. 16, q. un., n. 17 (ed. Vivès, Vol. XIII, p. 43a–b): "Isto modo ens continet multas passiones, quae non sunt res aliae ab ipso ente (…), distinguuntur tamen ab invicem formaliter et quidditative, et etiam ab ente, formalitate dico reali et quidditativa; (…) ergo ens continent unitive rationem unius, veri et boni aliorum (…)".

[129] *Ibid.*: "Aliter Metaphysica concludens tales passiones de ente, et illas considerans, non esset scientia realis".

possess an entity of their own, the formality.[130] It is true that being and the convertible transcendentals are distinct formalities, but this is not a criterion of transcendentality as such, for the relation between being and the disjunctive transcendentals requires, Scotus observes, another distinction than that of reality and reality, that is, a formal distinction.[131]

9.5.2 *The disjunctive transcendentals: The modes of being*

Scotus's new conception of transcendentality resulted in an extension of the transcendental domain to the disjunctive properties of being. His key account in the *Ordinatio* (I, d. 8) starts with a division of being into infinite and finite being and argues that both members of the division are transcendental. In this basic text he gives as other examples of the new class of transcendentals the disjunctions "necessary or possible being" and "act or potency". Nowhere in his works has Scotus attempted a definite enumeration of them. The notions mentioned by him are of two kinds. Some of them are correlatives: every being is either prior or posterior, cause or caused. The other group consists of attributes contrarily opposed: every being is necessary or contingent, infinite or finite, absolute or relative, one or many.[132]

Being and the disjunctive transcendentals: Modal distinction

Can one deduce the disjunctive properties from the concept of "being"? Scotus explicitly denies this when he considers the demonstrability of the proposition: "There is contingency in things". This proposition, he argues, cannot be proven by something better known (*notius*) or from something prior (*a priori*). The reason is that "contingent" immediately belongs to being of which it is a disjunctive property, so that

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[130] J. P. Beckmann, *Die Relationen der Identität und Gleichheit nach Johannes Duns Scotus. Untersuchungen zur Ontologie der Beziehungen*, Bonn 1967 (Abhandlungen zur Philosophie, Psychologie und Pädagogik, 44), pp. 216–226.

[131] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 139 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. IV, p. 222): "Requiritur ergo distinction, inter illud a quo accipitur conceptus communis [*sc.* entis] et inter illud a quo accipitur conceptus proprius, non ut distinctio realitatis et realitatis (…)".

[132] On the disjunctive transcendentals, A. B. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, pp. 128–161 (Cf. his scheme of these notions on p. 161). R. Lay, "*Passiones entis disiunctae*", pp. 51–78 and pp. 358–389.

there is no *medium* by means of which it can be deduced from being. Just as a simple convertible attribute immediately belongs to being, the disjunction as a whole ("contingent or necessary"), which is convertible with being, cannot be proven a priori of its immediate subject.[133]

With respect to the parts of the disjunction, the case of the imperfect member is different from that of the perfect member. The less noble member of the disjunction cannot be proven of being; it is rather evident from experience or *per se notum* that there is contingency in things.[134] The existence of the nobler member, however, can be demonstrated. Scotus formulates a general rule, which Allan Wolter has called: "the law of the disjunctive attributes of being". If the less noble member of the disjunction is said of some being, one can conclude that the nobler member is in some being, although not conversely. If the nobler member of the disjunction is present to some subject, it does not follow that the less noble member is present to that subject. If there is a necessary being, it is not valid to conclude to the existence of some contingent being, for the truth of the second proposition is not required for the truth of the first.[135]

The idea of disjunctive transcendentals raises a serious difficulty. They contract the univocal concept of "being" by a primary division, but how are the concepts of "infinite being" proper to God and of "finite being" proper to the creature related to the common concept?

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[133] Duns Scotus, *Lectura*, I, d. 39, q. 1–5, n. 39 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVII, pp. 490–491): "De primo, quod sit contingentia in rebus, non potest—ut puto—probari per notius, nec a priori, quia ens dividitur per 'necessarium' et 'possibile'. Et sicut passio est convertibilis cum aliquo subiecto quae immediate inest illi subiecto, nec probari potest per aliquid notius, ita nec passio disiuncta de subiecto suo—cui immediate inest—per notius probari potest. (…)"; n. 40 (p. 491): "Et ideo non video quomodo tota aliqua passio disiuncta posset a priori ostendi de suo subiecto immediato". Cf. *Ordinatio*, I, d. 39, q. 1–5 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. VI, Appendix A, pp. 414–415).

[134] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* I, d. 39, q. 1–5, n. 40 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. XVII, p. 491): "(…) nec etiam [video] quomodo pars illa quae est ignobilior in tali passione posset ostendi de suo subiecto. Propter quod accipiendum est tamquam per se notum quod sit contingentia in entibus".

[135] *Ibid.*, n. 39 (p. 491): "Si autem una pars illius passionis disiunctae dicatur de aliquo subiecto sibi appropriato,—si illa pars sit ignobilior pars illius passionis, ex hoc quod inest suo subiecto potest concludi quod pars nobilior illius passionis insit subiecto sibi appropriato, licet non e contra (quia non potest pars ignobilior passionis inesse alicui nisi pars nobilior insit, licet e contra possit). (…) et sic etiam sequitur, si aliquod ens sit contingens, quod aliquod ens sit necessarium, et non e contra". Cf. A. B. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, p. 137.

The structure of *genus* and *differentia* is not a suitable model for understanding this relationship, since genus and specific difference are formally distinct and a specific difference always adds a formality or reality to that of a genus. The application of this model to the relationship between "being" and "infinite being" would therefore imply, as Scotus recognizes, the denial of the divine simplicity and transcendence, for God would share the reality of a genus with finite being.

Scotus gives an ingenuous solution to this difficulty by introducing another model he found in the categorial order for accounting differences. The theory of "the intension (*intensio*) and remission (*remissio*) of forms" maintains that an accidental form or quality has a certain "latitude" (*latitudo*) within which it can be increased or decreased without a change in the essence or species of the form itself. Scotus's example is "white": the color can be found with various degrees (*gradus*) of intensity, which are real differences but not specific differences constituting different species of "white". He applies this distinction between a reality and its degree of perfection or "intrinsic mode" to the transcendental level of being and its disjunctive properties. The relationship of the common concept of "being" to its contracting notions of "infinite" and "finite" does not correspond to the structure of genus and specific difference, but to the relation of a reality to its intrinsic mode of perfection.[136]

The designation of the disjunctive transcendentals as the "intrinsic modes" of being is at odds with their designation as "proper attributes" of being, for as *passiones* they would be extrinsic to their subject. The qualification "intrinsic" is meant to indicate that the modes do not add, as a specific difference does to a genus, a new reality extrinsic

[136] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 8, p. 1, q. 3, n. 138 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. IV, p. 222) the example of "white"; n. 139 (pp. 222–223): "Requiritur ergo distinctio, inter illud a quo accipitur conceptus communis et inter a quo accipitur conceptus proprius, non ut distinctio realitatis et realitatis sed ut distinctio realitatis et modi proprii et intrinseci eiusdem,—quae distinctio sufficit ad habendum conceptum perfectum vel imperfectum de eodem, quorum imperfectus sit communis et perfectus sit proprius. Sed conceptus generis et differentiae requirunt distinctionem realitatum, non tantum eiusdem realitatis perfecte et imperfecte conceptae". Cf. *ibid.*, n. 108 (pp. 202–203): "illa autem per quae commune aliquod contrahitur ad Deum et creaturam, sunt finitum et infinitum, qui dicunt gradus intrinsecos ipsius". Scotus makes the following annotation: "Modus intrinsecus non est differentia, in quocumque gradu formae". Cf. H. Möhle, *Formalitas und modus intrinsecus*. Die Entwicklung der scotischen Metaphysik bei Franciscus de Mayronis, Münster 2007 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. Neue Folge, 70), pp. 302–309.

to the reality of which they are the modes. "Infinite" and "finite", for instance, do not contract being from the outside to another reality, but determine the degree of perfection of the same reality "being". A reality cannot therefore be conceived perfectly, if the concept does not include its inner mode.

The modal explication of being: The completion of the transcendental science

Scotus's understanding of the disjunctive transcendentals as the inner modes of being indicates that this part of his doctrine intends a "modal explication" of being.[137] We encountered the same expression in the analysis of Aquinas's account of the transcendentals. In *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1, he is looking for a model different from that of genus and difference in order to explain the "addition" of other concepts to the first concept of the intellect, "being". He argues that an "addition" to being is only possible in the sense of an inner explication of the modes of being (*modi esendi*). This explanation occurs in two ways, either with respect to the special modes of being, expressed by the categories, or with respect to the general modes of being, expressed by the transcendentals (see ch. 6.1). In both Aquinas and Scotus the modal explication is an inner explication of transcendental being, but in Aquinas it is concerned with the *convertible* properties, in Scotus with the *disjunctive* properties.

Scotus's modal explication is essentially a proof of God's existence based on "the law of the disjunctive attributes". The law asserts that if the less noble member is said of some being, the nobler member can be concluded to be. That the end of the modal explication is the proof for the existence of God is illustrated by the proof in the *Ordinatio*, which is the reply to the question "Whether in the realm of beings something exists which is actually infinite".[138] The question as to God's existence is phrased in terms of the existence of an infinite being.

The phrasing of the question also shows the particular importance of the disjunctive property "infinite" as the adequate expression of the difference between God and creature. Human reason, Scotus observes,

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[137] The expression was introduced by L. Honnefelder, *Scientia transcendens*, p. XVIII.

[138] For Scotus's complicated proof, cf. *Ordinatio*, I, d. 2, p. 1, q. 1–2, nn. 40–73 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. II, Vatican 1950, pp. 149–173). Cf. L. Honnefelder, *Scientia transcendens*, pp. 167–199.

can reach many concepts proper to God, such as the concepts of all the pure perfections, taken in the highest degree (*in summo*), e.g. "the supreme good" or "the highest wisdom". But the most perfect and at the same time simplest concept we can have of God is that of "infinite being". Scotus's argument for its simplicity is based on his understanding of the disjunctive transcendentals as inner modes of being. The concept of "infinite being" is more simple than that of "good being" or "true being", because "infinite" is not, like "good" or "true", an attribute or property of being but rather an intrinsic mode.[139] It is also the most perfect concept, because it contains virtually more than any other concept: Just as "being" virtually includes "true" and "good" in itself, so "infinite being" includes "infinite truth" and "infinite goodness", and indeed every absolute perfection under the *ratio* of "infinite".[140]

The intrinsic connection between the modal explication of being and Scotus's proof of God's existence appears from the structure of his treatise *De primo principio*.[141] It is an inquiry into the knowledge of God that natural reason (*ratio naturalis*) can attain starting from "being" (*ens*). Although being has several properties that are suitable to that purpose, Scotus chooses the property "essential order" (*ordo essentialis*) as "the more fruitful middle". Since this property implies that every being is "prior or posterior", he thus takes a disjunctive transcendental as his point of departure.[142] Scotus first establishes (ch. 3) a primacy in the orders of efficient causality, finality and eminence, and demonstrates that this "threefold primacy" pertains to one simple nature. In ch. 4 he introduces, as we have seen, the notion of a

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[139] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1–2, n. 58 (ed. Commissio Scotistica, Vol. III, p. 40): "Tamen conceptus perfectior simul et simplicior, nobis possibilis, est conceptus entis infiniti. Iste enim est simplicior quam conceptus entis boni, entis veri, vel aliorum similium, quia 'infinitum' non est quasi attributum vel passio entis (…), sed dicit modum intrinsecum illius entitatis, ita quod cum dico 'infinitum ens' non habeo conceptum quasi per accidens, ex subiecto et passione, sed conceptum per se subiecti in certo gradu perfectionis, scilicet infinitatis".

[140] *Ibid.*, n. 59 (pp. 40–41): "Probatur perfectio istius conceptus, tum quia iste conceptus, inter omnes nobis conceptibiles conceptus, virtualiter plura includit—sicut enim ens includit vitualiter verum et bonum in se, ita ens infinitum includit verum infinitum et bonum infinitum, et omnem 'perfectionem simpliciter' sub ratione infiniti".

[141] Cf. R. P. Prentice, *The Basic Quidditative Metaphysics of Duns Scotus as Seen in his "De primo principio"*, Rome 1970 (Spicilegium Pontificii Athenai Antoniani, 16).

[142] Duns Scotus, *De primo principio*, c. 1, 2 (ed. Wolter, p. 3): "Adiuva me, Domine, inquirentem ad quantam cognitionem de vero esse, quod tu es, possit pertingere nostra ratio naturalis ab ente (…) inchoando"; c. 1, 3 (p. 3): "Quamvis entis sint plurimae passiones quarum consideratio valeret ad propositum prosequendum, tamen de ordine essentiali tanquam de medio foecundiori primo prosequar isto modo".

"pure perfection" that is central in his doctrine of the transcendentals ("Every pure perfection is necessarily in the highest nature, and in the highest degree") and shows that the first nature is "intelligent" and "volitional". This finally leads Scotus to the conclusion that the first being is infinite.

The end of the modal explication, the knowledge of the first and infinite being, God, is the completion of the transcendental science. This outcome agrees with Scotus's opposition to the divorce of natural theology from metaphysics in the first question in his *Metaphysics* commentary. He rejects the idea of splitting up metaphysics into two distinct sciences, a *metaphysica transcendens* and a special science of the divine (see 9.1.2). Scotus defends the onto-theological unity of the transcendental science of being by maintaining that "all things naturally knowable of God will be transcendentals". His transcendental metaphysics includes the study of what is transcendent.

Modern scholarship has attempted to demonstrate the originality of Scotus's project by presenting his metaphysics as a "pure ontology" in contrast to the long Western tradition of "onto-theology". The idea of a "pure ontology" with the exclusion of "theological" issues is found in fourteenth-century Scotists, like Nicholas Bonet (see ch. 10.4) and Francis of Marchia (see ch. 10.5.3), but does not seem an adequate characteristic of Scotus's project.[143] In this respect, too, his conception is marked by the duality of tradition and innovation: it emphasizes the onto-theological unity of metaphysics, but realizes this unity in a manner quite different from the onto-theology in Aquinas or Henry of Ghent.

Concluding observations

Duns Scotus's metaphysics is not, as it has been suggested, "a step to Transcendental Philosophy", but represents rather a turn in the history of the doctrine of the transcendentals because of a number of

[143] L. Honnefelder, *Ens inquantum ens*, p. 55 sees Scotus's metaphysics as the first attempt in history to implement metaphysics as *ontology* (see also note 1). For the "onto-theological" structure of Scotus's metaphysics, cf. A. B. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, pp. 176–184: "Metaphysics as a theologic". O. Boulnois, "Quand commence l'ontothéologie? Aristote, Thomas d'Aquin et Duns Scot", in: *Revue Thomiste* 95 (1995), pp. 85–108. Th. Kobusch, "Der neue Weg der Metaphysik: Heinrich von Gent, Meister Eckhart, Duns Scotus", in: L. Honnefelder / A. Speer / Th. Kobusch / S. Bullido del Barrio (eds.), *Johannes Duns Scotus, 1308–2008*, pp. 125–138.

innovations. He advances a new conception of transcendentality, of the cognitive primacy of being and of the predicability of being. Scotus understands the traditional feature of transcendental notions as the *communia* in a more radical manner by interpreting being and the properties convertible with it as univocally common to God and creatures. The claim of the univocity of being was his most challenging (and most controversial) innovation. Against the general opinion that "analogical" commonness is the mark of transcendentality Scotus introduces a new kind of univocation, which "transcends" the univocation of a genus, as a precondition of a science of being in general.

At the same time Duns Scotus does not see commonness as the exclusive criterion and necessary condition of transcendentality. He determines the *ratio* of *transcendens* in a purely negative manner: what is transcendental is not contained under a genus. The separation from commonness makes it possible to include what is formally said of God into the notion and to extend the transcendental domain to the disjunctive properties of being.

Scotus's transcendental metaphysics has an onto-theological structure. The presence of the theological motive is apparent in the reason for his main account in the *Ordinatio*, namely, the tension between the simplicity of God and the attribution to God of predicates common to him and creatures; in the inclusion of the divine in Scotus's notion of *transcendens*; in the introduction of the "pure perfections" into the doctrine; and in the modal explication of being by means of the disjunctive transcendentals, which ends in the proof of God's existence.

The impact of Scotus's thought was immense. He inaugurated a "school" which attracted an impressive circle of (critical) followers (see ch. X). But his impact was by no means restricted to the "Scotist school". The influence of his conception of transcendental thought can also be perceived in the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* of Francisco Suárez, which present a comprehensive systematization of transcendental metaphysics (see ch. XIV).

CHAPTER TEN

DISCUSSIONS ON THE SCOTIST CONCEPTION

Scotus's new model of a "transcendental science" dominated the discussions in the fourteenth century. His epoch-making claim of the univocity of being in particular met with controversy even among his own disciples—a typical feature of the "Scotist School", in which one was not required to uphold every thing the Master had taught. The debate started with the criticism of the English Franciscan William of Alnwick (d. 1333), one of Scotus's closest associates. In his commentary on the *Sentences*, read in Paris sometime before 1315, he regards Scotus's position to be inconsistent, when it holds the univocity of being but denies its univocal predication of the transcendental properties and the ultimate differences. According to Alnwick being is predicated *in quid* of all intelligibles.[1] In some nineteen arguments against Scotus he tries to show that if being is taken in its most general *ratio formalis* as what is opposed to nothing, then whatever is distinct from nothing must essentially include being. Ultimate differences and transcendentals, however, are not nothing.[2] Two anonymous *Quaestiones ordinariae de conceptibus transcendentibus*, written by a follower of Scotus at Paris sometime between 1312 and 1316, defend Scotus's doctrine of univocity; the second question is a refutation of Alnwick's attack.[3]

The development of the transcendental theory in the early fourteenth century is still relatively unknown.[4] In this chapter we shall

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[1] Cf. S. D. Dumont, "The Univocity of the Concept of Being in the Fourteenth Century: John Duns Scotus and William of Alnwick", in: *Mediaeval Studies* 49 (1987), pp. 1–75 (with a text edition of William of Alnwick, *In I Sententiarum*, q. 8, pp. 35–70).

[2] William of Alnwick, *In I Sententiarum*, q. 8 (ed. Dumont, p. 49, ll. 398–404).

[3] Cf. S. F. Brown / S. D. Dumont, "The Univocity of the Concept of Being in the Fourteenth Century: III. An early Scotist", in: *Mediaeval Studies* 51 (1989), pp. 1–129 (with a text edition of the two questions, pp. 39–129).

[4] Two collective volumes deal with early fourteenth-century thought. The journal *Quaestio* 8 (2008) is devoted to "La posterità di Giovanni Duns Scoto" and includes a contribution by W. Goris, "After Scotus. Dispersions of Metaphysics, of the Scope of Intelligibility, and of the Transcendental in the early 14th Century", pp. 139–157. The other volume is S. F. Brown / T. Dewender / Th. Kobusch (eds.), *Philosophical Debates at Paris in the Early Fourteenth Century*, Leiden – Boston 2009 (Studien und

focus on five Franciscan thinkers, who all make innovative contributions to the debate on Scotus's model:

(10.1) Peter Auriol (d. 1322), who proposes an alternative doctrine of the transcendentals in his criticisms of Scotus;
(10.2) Francis of Meyronnes (d. 1328), who composes the first separate *Tractatus de transcendentibus* in the Middle Ages;
(10.3) Peter Thomae (d. 1340), who systematizes Scotus's account but also develops a new transcendental logic;
(10.4) Nicholas Bonet (d. 1343), who presents the first systematic account of a transcendental metaphysics;
(10.5) Francis of Marchia (d. 1344), who introduces a new order of the transcendental notions and questions the onto-theological unity of First Philosophy. He intends a splitting up of metaphysics into a general metaphysics of what is transcendental and a particular metaphysics of what is transcendent.

10.1 Peter Auriol: An alternative doctrine

The most significant Franciscan thinker in Paris after Scotus was Peter Auriol (ca. 1280–1322), who began his studies in Paris soon after 1300, where he possibly heard Duns Scotus. One of the most influential works of philosophical theology of the later Middle Ages is his monumental *Scriptum* of the first book of the *Sentences*, which was mostly completed during his lectorship at the Order's *studium generale* in Toulouse. It pre-dates Auriol's lectures on the *Sentences* at the University of Paris, which survive as *Reportationes*. He was regent master at Paris from 1318 to 1320.[5] In his works, which were all composed in the decade between 1310 and 1320, Auriol critically examines several conceptions that are crucial for Scotus's understanding of transcendentality: the unity of the concept of "being"; the first adequate object of the intellect; the possibility of a "transcendental science"; and the formal distinction between the transcendentals. At the same

Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 102), which, however, does not contain a study on the doctrine of the transcendentals.

[5] For an overview, cf. C. Schabel, *Theology at Paris, 1316–1345. Peter Auriol and the Problem of Divine foreknowledge and future contingents*, Aldershot 2000, pp. 67–76.

time he seeks new ways and proposes alternative views of these topics.[6] For this reason Auriol was seen as Scotus's chief critic by the Scotists Francis of Meyronnes and Peter Thomae.

10.1.1 *The unity of the concept of "being"*

Auriol critically discusses the most innovative aspect of Scotus's doctrine, the claim of the univocity of being, when dealing, in his *Sentences* commentary, with the typically Scotist problem "Whether God is included under the concept of being?" The problem of "being in general" is not, he remarks right at the outset, a "grammatical question" that examines the meaning of the term "being" (for instance, whether it only signifies "real" being). The question concerning the most common concept is a *quaestio metaphysica* and very difficult (*difficilis valde*), for doubt (*dubium*) arises here as to whether the concept of "being" includes all things under their proper and distinct *rationes*, that is, under a plurality of meanings, or under one common *ratio*.[7]

Another preliminary remark concerns the primary notions *ens, res* and *aliquid*. Auriol maintains that there is no difference at all between these three terms; they have the same meaning and signify the most common concept. In support of the identity of the three terms he refers to Avicenna, a reference of importance inasmuch as the Latin reception of Avicenna's doctrine of the primary concepts of the intellect had introduced *res* and *aliquid* as transcendental notions. However, Auriol's appeal is not unproblematic, since the Arab philosopher does indeed teach the extensional identity of the terms "being" and "thing" in his *Metaphysics*, but not that they signify the same concept. According to Auriol, not only the authority of Avicenna but also reason shows that *ens, res* and *aliquid* signify the same most common concept. One of his arguments is based on the fact that these terms

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[6] On Auriol's doctrine of the transcendentals, there exist two German dissertations: R. Lay, *Zur Lehre von den Transzendentalien bei Petrus Aureoli O.F.M.*, Bonn 1964 [Doctoral Thesis]. C. Gaus, *"etiam realis scientia". Petrus Aureolis konzeptualistische Transzendentalienlehre vor dem Hintergrund seiner Kritik am Formalitätenrealismus*, Leiden-Boston 2008 (Studien zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 100).

[7] Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, n. 46 (ed. E. M. Buytaert, Louvain-Paderborn 1956 (Franciscan Institute Publications. Text Series, 3), pp. 481–482), in particular: "Est enim hic valde dubium, utrum ille conceptus claudit omnia sub propriis rationibus actualibus et distinctis, vel claudat omnia sub una ratione communi (…). Secundum hoc enim est quaestio metaphysica et difficilis valde".

have the same divisions. Just as "being" is divided into "being in act" and "being in potency", into "intramental being" and "being outside the mind", in the same manner *aliquid* and *res* can be divided.[8]

Why does Auriol make this preliminary remark? His aim certainly is polemical, not so much against the Thomist tradition, in which *ens, res* and *aliquid* are seen as distinct transcendentals,[9] but against Scotism. He appeals, as we shall see, to the identity of *ens* and *aliquid* in his argumentation against Scotus's conception of "being". The remark is also directed against Scotists who argue for a difference between these terms in their interpretation of the Master's claim that being cannot be predicated *in quid* of ultimate differences. They hold that *aliquid* has a wider extension than *ens*, for ultimate differences, although not quiddditatively "being", are not nothing, but "something".[10] Auriol rejects this idea; it does not make any difference whether the metaphysical question as to the unity of the most common concept is raised in terms of *ens, res* or *aliquid*.

Auriol discusses the unity of the concept of "being" both in the *Scriptum* and in the *Reportatio Parisiensis* of his *Sentences* commentary. The two accounts are not repetitive, but complement one another.[11] The doubt as to whether the concept of "being" has a plurality of meanings or one common *ratio* suggests two possible answers to the question, but Auriol in fact presents three answers, to which three concrete positions correspond: the concept of "being" has (i) a plurality of meanings, the "common opinion" of analogy; or (ii) a unity of a distinct common *ratio*, the *opinio Scoti*; or (iii) a unity of an indeterminate *ratio*, Auriol's own view.

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[8] *Ibid.*, n. 47 (p. 482): "Secundo vero considerandum est, quod in isto quaesito pro eodem accipiendum est, sive quaestio currat de ente, sive de re, sive de 'aliquid'. Ens enim et res et aliquid significant istum conceptum communissimum, et dicunt penitus idem, sicut dicit Avicenna I *Metaphysicae*, et potest declarari multipliciter. Primo quidem quia habent easdem differentias et eodem modo dividuntur".

[9] A good example is the almost contemporary *Tractatus de sex transcendentibus* of the Dominican Francis of Prato (see ch. 1.4).

[10] See 10.5.2 on Francis of Marchia, who (somewhat later) presents a new order of the transcendental notions *ens, res* and *aliquid*.

[11] Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9 (ed. Buytaert, pp. 469–523). The account in the *Reportatio* has been edited by S. F. Brown, "Petrus Aureoli: *De unitate conceptus entis* (*Reportatio Parisiensis in I Sententiarum, dist. 2, p. 1, qq. 1–3 et p. 2, qq. 1–2*)", in: *Traditio* 50 (1995), pp. 199–248. Cf. also his classic article "Avicenna and The Unity of the Concept of Being. The Interpretations of Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Gerard of Bologna, and Peter Aurioli", in: *Franciscan Studies* 25 (1965), pp. 117–150; on Auriol, pp. 135–148.

Not a plurality of analogy

1. The "common opinion" denies the unity of the concept of "being" and holds that this concept signifies in act many distinct *rationes*, for instance, of the ten categories. "Being" signifies primarily the *ratio* of substance, the *rationes* of the other categories by attribution, and it expresses each under its own proper *ratio*, not under some common feature. "Being" has a plurality of meanings, but in the sense of a "disjunctive" concept, not in a "copulative" sense: when it is said of something that it is "being", one immediately conceives that it either is substance, or quantity, or quality, etc.[12]

Two aspects of Auriol's interpretation are noteworthy. The first thing is that for an author writing in the second decade of the fourteenth century, the "common opinion" on the concept of "being" is not the Scotist view, but a pluralistic understanding. The other remarkable aspect is that the latter position is identified with the analogical conception of being, although the original intention of the doctrine of analogy was just to bring a diversity of meanings to unity. Auriol refers to Gerard of Bologna, the first Carmelite Master at the University of Paris, as a representative of the "common opinion".

The first question of Gerard's *Quodlibet* I (from the year 1305) deals with the question "Whether anything can be predicated of God and creatures according to one and the same *ratio*?"[13] In preparation of his reply he discusses various modes of unity, among which the "unity of analogy" figures. It is a unity that in fact appears to be a plurality: "The unity of analogy is a unity in a certain respect (*secundum quid*), but really (*simpliciter*) a multitude". Therefore, things that are predicated analogically are really many, but in a certain respect one.[14] In this analogical-plural sense, "being" is predicated of God and creatures.

According to Gerard of Bologna, Scotus's claim that the concept of "being" is univocal is untenable. All the philosophical tradition is against it, since it teaches the "multiplicity" of being. The arguments

[12] Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, n. 49 (ed. Buytaert, p. 483).

[13] The text has been edited by S. F. Brown, "Gerard of Bologna's *Quodlibet* I, *Quaestio* 1: On the Analogy of Being", in: *Carmelus* 31 (1984), pp. 143–170.

[14] Gerard of Bologna, *Quodlibet* I, q. 1, a. 2 (ed. Brown, pp. 159–160), in particular: "Dicendum igitur quod unitas analogiae est unitas secundum quid et multitudo simpliciter, unde et quae analogice dicuntur sive analogiam habent sunt simpliciter plura vel multa, secundum quid autem unum".

Scotus presents are not compelling either. His famous argument "from a certain and doubtful concept" does not necessarily lead to a univocally common concept of being. The distinction between certainty and doubt can be preserved by recourse to disjunction: the intellect can be in doubt as to whether a thing is a substance but is certain that the thing *either* is *or* is not a substance.[15] This "disjunctive" concept of "being" agrees with Gerard's model of analogy.

2. Auriol rejects the "common opinion" and holds that all beings can be conceived under one single concept of "being". His most interesting argument is based on the different kinds of analogy (*ex differentia analogorum*).[16] The type of analogy described by Gerard of Bologna is not the only one, and in the case of "being" not even an adequate one.

That a variety of analogy models exists is not a new insight. Radulphus Brito (master in the Arts Faculty of the University of Paris at the end of the thirteenth century) recognizes that the intermediate position of analogy between equivocity and univocity is ambivalent, because one has to distinguish a *duplex analogia*. One kind inclines more towards equivocity, which occurs when something is said of many things according to diverse *rationes*, of which the one is ordered to the other. Brito illustrates this case with Aristotle's standard example of "healthy", which is predicated of animal, urine and food. The other kind of analogy inclines more towards univocity; that is the case when the *ratio* of something is in itself one, yet is participated in by one analogate prior to the other. This type of analogy is found in "being".[17]

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[15] *Ibid.*, a. 3 (ed. Brown, pp. 163–169).

[16] Peter Auriol, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 2, p. 1, q. 1 (ed. Brown, p. 212).

[17] Radulphus Brito, *Quaestiones super Physicam* (cited according to S. Donati, "La discussione sull'unità del concetto di ente nella tradizione di commento della 'Fisica': commenti parigini degli anni 1270–1315 ca.", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, Berlin-New York 2003 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 30), pp. 60–139, here p. 121, nt. 122): "Unde pono duplicem analogiam, unam talem quae accedit ad aequivocationem, quando aliquid habet diversas rationes in multis quorum unum habet attributionem ad aliud. Sicut est in sano, quia sanum non habet eundem modum praedicandi de animali, urina et cibo; immo praedicatur secundum diversas rationes. Alia est analogia quae magis accedit ad univocationem, scilicet quando ratio alicuius secundum se est una, tamen illa ratio per prius participatur ab uno quam ab alio, sicut calor per prius participatur ab igne quam ab aliis calidis. Et talis analogia reperitur in ente".

Auriol also distinguishes two kinds of analogy and likewise illustrates their difference by the examples of "healthy" and "being". In the case of "healthy", there is a type of analogy, in which the predicate is said of only one analogate, the animal; other things, such as urine and food, are healthy by extrinsic denomination. In the case of "being", however, there is a type of analogy, in which the predicate is formally said of all analogates, of Creator and creature, of substance and accident. Auriol rejects the common opinion on the analogy of being, which applies the first kind of analogy to "being", but he accepts the analogy of being in the second sense. Because "being" is formally present in all things, he concludes that it is possible to conceive all beings under one concept.[18]

Not a unity by univocity

Auriol admits the unity of the concept of "being", but rejects Scotus's opinion, who understood this unity as univocity. The concept of "being" has in Scotus's view the unity of a determinate *ratio* common to all things, which can be contracted (*contrahibilis*) by the addition of *rationes speciales*, such as "being *per se*" or "being in act". But despite the fact that, according to Auriol, the *opinio Scoti* is "subtler" and "nearer to truth" than the plural-analogical conception of "being", he distances himself from it: it is impossible that the concept of "being" expresses one determinate *ratio*, distinct from other meanings.[19]

The core of Auriol's criticism concerns the idea of an "addition" to "being". The problem of such an addition is a well-known difficulty in the doctrine of the transcendentals, as Aquinas's account in *De veritate* shows (see ch. 6.1). After having established that "being" is the first known, Aquinas concluded that "all other conceptions of the intellect must be gained by an addition to 'being'". But he immediately modified this conclusion, since nothing can be added to being as if it were extrinsic to it; what is outside of being, is nothing. An addition to "being" is only possible in the sense of an inner explication of modes of being that are not yet expressed by the term 'being' itself. Auriol presents a similar argument, but draws from it a conclusion

[18] Peter Auriol, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 2, p. 1, q. 1 (ed. Brown, pp. 212–14); *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, n. 141 (ed. Buytaert, pp. 521–2).

[19] Peter Auriol, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 2, p. 1, q. 2 (ed. Brown, p. 221); *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, n. 50 (ed. Buytaert, p. 484).

with respect to the concept of "being" itself, namely its complete indetermination, which he uses against Scotus.

If "being" were to signify a determinate *ratio* common to all things, they would all be unified in one nature. It is certain, however, that the proper *rationes* of things are wholly distinct, apparently because they add to "being" a special *ratio* by which they are formally distinguished from one another. But the idea of an addition to "being" appears to be impossible, since the proper *rationes* either add "something" (*aliquid*) or "nothing" (*nihil*). If they add "something", this would mean that they add "being" to "being", because, as Auriol had maintained in a preliminary remark to his account, there is no difference at all between the notions *ens* and *aliquid*. Since an addition of "being" to "being" is impossible, the special *rationes* thus add "nothing" to "being": every *ratio* is a *ratio* of being. When the concept of "being" is applied to special *rationes*, it fully coincides with them, without anything being added to it. The consequence of the "coincidence" model instead of "addition" is that the concept of "being" cannot be a common determinate *ratio*; it must be devoid of any determination.[20]

Unity by "indetermination" or "confusion"

Auriol's rejection of Scotus position is inseparable from his own positive reply to the question regarding the unity of the concept of "being". Its unity is a "unity of confusion" or of complete indetermination, which he explains by drawing a parallel with the unity of prime matter. Just as prime matter is one through the lack of any positive determination, so the concept of "being" is one, because it does not have a formal determination by which it is distinguished from other things; it is every *ratio*, albeit indeterminately.[21]

How far does Auriol's parallel with prime matter go? Aristotle had maintained (*Physics* III, c. 6) that prime matter because it is "amorphous", that is, without any formal determination, is in itself not know-

[20] Peter Auriol, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 2, p. 1, q. 2 (ed. Brown, pp. 221–223), in particular the core of the argument (p. 222): "Arguo igitur sic: ille conceptus cui omnis ratio est eadem, nullo addito penitus, est denudatus et spoliatus omni distincta et determinata ratione. Sed conceptus entis est idem omni rationi, nullo penitus addito. Igitur, conceptus entis est denudatus et spoliatus omni determinata et distincta ratione".

[21] *Ibid.* (p. 229).

able; does this also apply to being as such? One should not overcharge the comparison, for Auriol is not concerned with the knowability of being as being, but with the indetermination of its concept. He wants to make the existence of such a kind of concept plausible.

The intellect can conceive everything either determinately or indeterminately.[22] This can be illustrated through the concepts of a "species", a "genus" and "being", which form a series, characterized by a decreasing degree of determination. The concept of a *species* is the most determinate *ratio*, the concept of a *genus* has an intermediate position between complete determination and complete indetermination, the concept of *ens* is merely confused and fully indeterminate. In this way, Auriol gives a new sense to Aristotle's claim that "being" is not a genus. In the medieval tradition this statement had been interpreted as a negative expression of the transcendental character of "being"; "being" exceeds the categorial order of the genera because of its "too great commonness" (in the words of Duns Scotus). Auriol reads Aristotle's claim from a somewhat different perspective; it expresses the indetermination of "being".[23]

He describes the relationship between the concept of "being" and the proper *rationes* of things as that between a "total" concept and "partial" concepts. These expressions do not mean that the proper *rationes* of things are the constitutive parts of "being" as an integral whole. "Being" is a total concept (*conceptus totalis*), since it coincides with the proper meanings of things because of its indetermination; it is every *ratio* implicitly. The totality of "being" is one of an "implicit" concept that is explicated through the "partial" concepts. Auriol repeats that the contraction of being to special entities does not occur through the addition of a new *ratio*; the contraction must rather be understood as the "explication" of what was implicitly conceived before. The explication of what is implicit does not refer to a difference in the thing

[22] Cf. R. L. Friedman, "Peter Auriol on Intentions and Essential Predication", in: S. Ebbesen / R. L. Friedman (eds.), *Medieval Analyses in Language and Cognition*, Copenhagen 1999 (Historik-filosofiske Meddelester, 77), pp. 415–430.

[23] Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, nn. 56–57 (ed. Buytaert, pp. 485–486); n. 148 (p. 523): "ex isto modo ponendi evidentissime patet, quare ens non sit genus. Genus namque dicit unam formam mediam inter pure indistinctum, qualis est conceptus entis, et aliud pure distinctum, qualis est conceptus speciei. (…) Et haec est expressa intentio Philosophi et Commentatoris sui III *Metaphysicae*".

itself, but only concerns another mode of knowing the same thing conceived.[24]

In his entire account, Auriol assumes that there is a certain distinction between "concept" and *ratio*: the unity of the concept of "being" does not require one determinate *ratio* or an explicit content. But is it possible to form a concept without conceiving some *ratio*? Auriol himself objects to the assumed distinction that someone who holds that the concept of "being" is one and that this concept is devoid of any *ratio* seems to be caught in a contradiction, since *conceptus obiectalis* and *ratio* are identical.[25] He replies that the concept of "being" is everything conceivable (*omne conceptibile*), though indeterminately, implicitly and confusedly, in such a way that nothing conceivable (*nullum conceptibile*) remains in it explicitly. And because "what is conceivable" and *ratio* are the same, since every *ratio* is conceivable, it follows that no *ratio* is explicitly and actually here, but indistinctly.[26] Auriol's concept of being is marked by a dialectics of what is implicit or latent and what is explicit and distinct: the concept of "being" is *omne conceptibile*—as a "total" concept it is the horizon of all explicit *rationes*—, but at the same time *nullum conceptibile* because of its complete implicitness.

Auriol's understanding of "being" clearly differs from Scotus's univocal conception: "being" is an implicit and wholly indeterminate

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[24] Peter Auriol, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 2, p. 1, q. 3 (ed. Brown, pp. 230–231); d. 2, p. 2, q. 1 (pp. 235–236). *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, n. 53 (ed. Buytaert, p. 485): "conceptus ille [*sc.* 'ens'] est simpliciter denudatus in actu ab omni ratione, una vel pluribus, propria vel communi, tantummodo unus existens unitate confusionis et omnimodae indeterminationis, qui nimirum conceptus, dum applicatur ad proprias omnium rationes, coincidit in illas nullo addito sibi, quia quaelibet proprio [*corr.*: propria] ratio est ille conceptus, et nihil addit. Unde est pars illius conceptus totalis, cuius totalitas non est integritatis, sed confusionis et indeterminationis; nec partialitas propriarum rationum est partialitas integrans et constitutiva, sed determinans et explicativa". Cf. W. Goris, "Implicit Knowledge—Being as First Known in Peter of Oriol", in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 69 (2002), pp. 33–65.

[25] Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, n. 92 (ed. Buytaert, p. 505).

[26] *Ibid.*, n. 103 (pp. 508–509): "Ergo, necesse est quod ille conceptus sic sit simpliciter omne conceptibile, indeterminate tamen et implicite ac confuse, ut nullum conceptibile in eo explicite relinquatur. Et, cum conceptibile et ratio idem sint,—omnis enim ratio conceptibilis est—, relinquitur quod nulla ratio explicite sit ibi, sed indistincte. Actus autem distinguit et separat, ut dicitur VII *Metaphysicae*. Unde, concluditur quod nulla ratio in actu ibi sit, nec propria, nec communis; sed quod conceptus denudatus sit ab omni ratione et omni conceptibili in actu".

concept. One wonders what consequences his alternative view has for the doctrine of the transcendentals and for the project of metaphysics. Auriol himself points, as we shall see (10.1.3), to some difficulties of his analysis. But first we turn to a problem, which is linked with the cognitive primacy of "being" and Auriol discusses in the next section of his *Scriptum*. Immediately after his account of the unity of the concept of being he raises the question as to the first object of the intellect—another topic that for Scotus was closely related to the possibility of a science of being.

10.1.2 *The first object of the intellect*

Scotus had supplied the medieval debate on the first and proper object of the intellect with a new and broader basis by distinguishing a threefold order of what is intelligible: the order of origin, of perfection and of adequation (see ch. 9.4). Auriol adopts this distinction, but gives it a personal interpretation.[27]

The first known in the order of origin: The confused concept of "being"

Auriol agrees with Scotus that Henry of Ghent's opinion, God is what is first known by the human intellect, is untenable. Although it is true that God is the first intelligible in the order of perfection, he is not what is first in the order of the origin of knowledge.[28] Auriol also agrees with Scotus that what is first known in this order is transcendental "being", but does not subscribe to his claim that "being" is the first that is *distinctly* known. For Scotus "being" is an irreducibly simple concept that cannot therefore be conceived in a confused manner (see ch. 9.4.2).

Auriol's argument that "being" is what is first known by the intellect, but not in a distinct way, consists of two considerations. First, concepts that are first impressed by things in the intellect are the result of weak and imperfect impressions; they require "less vigor" of the intellect than other impressions of the same things and therefore form "the beginning of comprehension (*principium comprehensionis*) in childhood". Second, the more imperfect the impression made by a

[27] *Ibid.*, sect. 10 (pp. 531–550). Cf. W. Goris, "Implicit Knowledge", in particular pp. 49–60.

[28] Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 10, nn. 31–35 (ed. Buytaert, pp. 531–533).

thing in the intellect, the more common the concept is. This goes on until the most common concept is reached, the concept of "being". It can be caused by everything in the world, and is consequently a concept devoid of any *ratio obiectiva*.[29] We see here that Auriol's explanation of the cognitive primacy of "being" conforms to his account of the unity of this concept: what is first known is the wholly indeterminate and confused concept of "being".

Auriol seeks support in Avicenna for his conclusion that the first known is the most confused concept. He reads Avicenna's doctrine of the primary notions of the intellect in the light of the beginning of Aristotle's *Physics* (I, c. 1, 184a 17–21), where the Philosopher states that confused things are known before determined things. According to Auriol, Avicenna intends to say that the concepts of "being" and "thing", which are first impressed in the soul because they are common to all things, are the most confused concepts.[30]

Auriol transforms the idea of a first known. He does not use, like Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, the method of a reflexive analysis, a "resolution", to establish the primacy of "being" as the condition for all further concepts of the intellect. He looks for the "principle" of knowledge, not in a foundational but in a temporal sense: the beginning of concept formation in a child. The *prima* are the *communissima* and, consequently, the *confusissima*.[31]

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[29] *Ibid.*, n. 43 (p. 535): "ille conceptus primo imprimitur intellectui, respectu cuius requiritur vigor minus in intellectu; continue namque intellectus vigoratur, qui tamen a principio iuxta puerilem aetatem debilis est, ut experientia docet. Sed conceptus entis et alii confusi intellectum minus exigunt vigoratum quam conceptus specierum specialissimarum. (…) Ergo conceptus communior primo imprimitur intellectui"; n. 49 (p. 537): "si quaeritur quis conceptus primo imprimitur intellectui, dicendum est quod circa principium comprehensionis quae fit in pueritia primo imprimuntur generales conceptus (…); et sic semper relinquitur quod conceptus entis fuit ille qui primo extitit generatus in mente". *In II Sententiarum*, d. 3, q. 2, a. 4 (ed. Rome 1605, p. 68aF): "quanto magis faciunt imperfectam impressionem, tanto magis intellectus ponit eam intentionem magis communem et universalem, et sic procedendo usque ad conceptum primum generalissimum, et ultimo usque ad conceptum entis; quam quidem imperfectam impressionem facit omnis res de mundo, et ideo conceptus entis est communis [omni] rei de mundo, cui conceptui non correspondet ratio aliqua obiectiva, sed est denudatus ab omni ratione obiectiva".

[30] Cf. Peter Auriol, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 2, p. 1, q. 1 (ed. Brown, p. 216); *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, n. 62 (ed. Buytaert, p. 490): "Sed Avicenna dicit I *Metaphysicae*, quod res et ens sunt communia omnibus, et per consequens confusissima".

[31] Cf. Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 10, n. 49 (ed. Buytaert, p. 536): "Est itaque sciendum quod aliqui conceptus sunt qui prius simpliciter,

The fourfold object of the intellect in the order of adequation

In his inquiry into the formal or adequate object of the intellect Auriol begins with presenting the opinions of some *doctores*: this object is "the quiddity of the material thing" according to Aquinas, "the true" (*verum*) according to the common opinion, "being" (*ens*) because of a double primacy, that of commonness and that of virtuality, according to Duns Scotus.[32] Auriol is not satisfied with their opinions and proposes a new, comprehensive view. The object of any potency can be fourfold: the moving object (*motivum*), the denominative object (*denominativum*), the predicative object (*praedicativum*) and the terminating object (*terminativum*).

The *obiectum motivum* is the formal *ratio* of a thing, which moves and actuates the potency; just as the moving object of sight is a particular color, so the moving object of the intellect is "the proper entity" (*propria entitas*) of a thing. The *obiectum denominativum* is the moving *ratio* under the aspect of denomination; this object of the intellect is "the extramental true" (*verum quod est in re*) that is identical with "intelligible". The *obiectum praedicativum* is that which can be predicated of all *rationes* moving some potency; the object of the intellect by common predication is "being" (*ens*). The *obiectum terminativum*, which is object "in the most proper sense" according to Auriol, is "the true that exists in the mind". The intellectual act terminates, not in the thing as it exists in reality, but in the thing as it is put by the intellect into a special mode of being, which Auriol calls "apparent being" (*esse apparens*), "intentional being" or "objective being". The conceived thing put into objective being corresponds and is in conformity with the extramental thing and is therefore the objective truth of a thing.[33]

In the secondary literature the most attention has been paid to the fourth object, because it expresses the active or formative character of the intellect that brings things to "apparent being". Auriol's "terminating object" thus reveals the constitutive role of the human mind in our understanding of reality through the idea of "objective being".[34] But from a transcendental point of view there are other remarkable

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dum puer incipit assumere intellectus, in mente eius imprimuntur; et haec sunt confusissima".

[32] *Ibid.*, nn. 53–81 (pp. 538–544).

[33] *Ibid.*, nn. 82–99 (pp. 544–550).

[34] Cf. Th. Kobusch, "Petrus Aureoli. Philosophie des Subjekts", in: id. (ed.), *Philosophen des Mittelalters. Eine Einführung*, Darmstadt 2000, pp. 236–249.

features in his fourfold division. The most obvious one is Auriol's presentation of the *obiectum motivum*, because it implies a change of the traditional view, insofar as the focus shifts from what is common to what is proper to things: the "moving object" of the intellect is the "*proper* entity" of things, not an intelligible feature *common* to them.

From the reasons Auriol adduces it becomes evident that the ontological presupposition of his division is the primacy of the singular thing. One of his arguments is based on the parallelism between sight and intellect. Sight is immediately moved by a particular color, not by the specific *ratio* of a color or by the *ratio* of color in general, for "actions are of singular things (*actiones singularium sunt*)". A fortiori it holds for the intellect that it is immediately moved by the "proper entity" of a thing.[35] Auriol appeals to a Scholastic adage from the theory of action in order to establish that the common feature of "being colored" cannot be the formal object of sight.

In another argument he explicitly denies the necessity of a common *ratio*. If there were, he contends, some common *ratio obiectiva* by means of which the intellect would be brought to what it understands, this would be the *ratio* of "being" or "true". But it is manifest that the intellect does not have the concept of "being" first if that meant that the intellect must preconceive "being" in order to understand the proper entity of things. For whoever wants to understand "man" does not first form the confused concept of "being" by means of which he would attain the concept of "man".[36] There exists a tension between Auriol's claim that "being" is the first known in the order of the generation of knowledge and his contention in the present argument that the concept of "being" is not necessary for the formation of the concept of "man". It shows that the idea of a first known has lost its foundational function.

The transcendental notions are not altogether absent from Auriol's division of the object of the intellect. He incorporates "true" and "being" into this division, but their position is secondary. "True" is

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[35] Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 10, n. 85 (ed. Buytaert, p. 546).

[36] *Ibid.*, n. 86 (ed. Buytaert, p. 546): "Praeterea, si esset aliqua communis ratio obiectiva qua mediante intellectus ferretur in ea quae intelligit, illa esset ratio entis vel veri. Sed constat quod intellectus non habet primo conceptum entis vel veri, ut ipsum praeconcipiat si debeat intelligere aliquam propriam entitatem. Non enim volens intelligere hominem, primo format sibi conceptum entis confusum, quo mediante attingat hominem. Ergo omnem rationem immediate attingit".

only object by denomination, "being" is object by common predication. One wonders how "being" can be such an object in view of Auriol's understanding of being as a concept without a determinate and definite *ratio*. Can a fully implicit concept be the common predicate of all moving objects of the intellect? The contrast to Scotus's analysis is conspicuous. For him transcendental being must be the first adequate object of the intellect, if metaphysics will be a *scientia transcendens*.

10.1.3 *Metaphysics as the transcendental science: Deconstruction?*

What consequences do Auriol's views on "being" and the first object of the intellect have for the project of metaphysics? Can there be a science of being, when the *ratio* of its subject is completely indeterminate? Auriol himself raises the question as to whether being as being taken in its total extension can have intrinsic properties (*passiones*).[37] Since these properties of being are the transcendentals, his query comes down to the question of whether there can be a transcendental science.

Auriol draws a radical conclusion: "being in general" (*ens in communi*) has no properties. Such a property must be outside the concept of being and thus be "nothing", since every property is, as Aristotle had indicated in his *Posterior Analytics*, outside the concept of its subject. It only makes sense to speak of "properties of being", if a *particular* being is considered, for a particular being has properties distinct from its proper entity—a concession that is in line with the ontological presupposition of Auriol's analysis of the first object of the intellect, namely, the centrality of the singular thing. He reproaches thinkers who held that being has properties for having failed to distinguish between being in general and any particular being whatsoever.[38]

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[37] Peter Auriol, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 2, p. 2, q. 1 (ed. Brown, pp. 232–241). For Auriol's conception of metaphysics, cf. M. Pickavé, "Metaphysics as First Science: The Case of Peter Auriol", in: *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 15 (2004), pp. 487–516.

[38] Cf. Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, n. 124 (ed. Buytaert, p. 516): "ens in communi nullam habet propriam passionem (…); pro tanto autem dicuntur passiones entis, quia considerato aliquo ente particulari, aliud est propria entitas illius ab unitate, bonitate, priori et posteriori, et similibus. Unde, in hoc decipiuntur putantes quod ens habeat passiones. Hoc enim non est verum de ente simpliciter (…). Sed verum est hoc de quolibet ente particulari".

Auriol admits that his conclusion causes difficulties. If being in general has no properties, a first consequence seems to be that metaphysics is no longer a *scientia*, because every demonstrative science examines the properties belonging to its subject. For this reason Auriol's thought has been interpreted as a "dismantling of metaphysics".[39] Another consequence seems to be the "destruction" of the *communia* or *transcendentia* "one", "true" and "good", which are said to be the properties of being as being and to be convertible with being, not with a special *ratio* of being.[40] His reply to both difficulties deserves our attention.

Possibility of metaphysics and the doctrine of supposition

Auriol seeks a solution for the difficulties on the basis of a distinction derived from the doctrine of "supposition". This semantic theory is usually related to his younger contemporary William of Ockham, but already plays a prominent role in Auriol's thought. He does not offer an elaborate doctrine, but rather presupposes it by distinguishing between two kinds of supposition, the *suppositio simplex* and the *suppositio personalis indeterminata*. There is "simple supposition", when the term of a proposition stands for (*supponit*) its concept only, "indeterminate personal supposition", when the term stands indeterminately for the particular instances falling under that concept. Auriol illustrates the former kind of supposition by the proposition "Man is a species" (*homo est species*), in which the term *homo* stands for its concept only, and the latter kind by the proposition "A man runs" (*homo currit*), in which the term *homo* indeterminately stands for "this" or "that" man.[41]

He next applies this distinction to "being". If "being" has "simple supposition" and stands for its concept, it does not have properties, for nothing escapes this concept when it is considered in its full extension and the unity of indistinct totality. But this conclusion must be

[39] W. Goris, "Implicit Knowledge", p. 53.

[40] Peter Auriol, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 2, p. 2, q. 1 (ed. Brown, p. 238): "Sed contra istam conclusionem sunt aliquae difficultates. Primo, quia secundum hoc metaphysica non esset scientia, quia subiectum eius, in quantum subiectum eius, non habet proprias passiones. Item, secundo, quia videntur hic destrui omnia dicta communia. Nam omnes dicunt quod transcendentia, cuiusmodi sunt unum, bonum, et huiusmodi, sunt passiones entis in quantum ens".

[41] *Ibid.* (p. 237).

completed by another one from the viewpoint of supposition. "Being" can have "indefinite personal supposition" and stand for any particular being whatsoever. Taken in this way, it stands for all the special forms of being and has properties.[42] A comparison with "number", the subject of arithmetics, can clarify the distinction.

"Number", taken in the abstract, as it stands for the nature of number in general, is neither odd nor even—the properties of number—, for it abstracts from them. However, if number has personal supposition and stands for this number or that number, it necessarily is odd or even. Similarly there are certain properties that are present in every determined being, such as act and potency, prior and posterior. These are properties which belong to being as being, insofar as it has personal supposition. According to Auriol, this is the position which all philosophers wanted to express when they said that being qua being has properties. Being has properties that have the same extension as being (*aequant ambitum entis*), if it indeterminately stands for this or that being.[43]

In this manner, Auriol concludes, he has solved the difficulty concerning the scientific character (*ratio scientiae*) of metaphysics. The application of the theory of supposition to "being" has shown that the subject of this science has properties, insofar as "being" has personal supposition.[44]

Categorial and transcendental

Auriol's solution also makes clear that his position does not imply the "destruction" of the transcendentals, for these notions are the properties of being if being is taken in the sense he has defined. Yet one might wonder whether his further account of these properties does not

[42] *Ibid.*: "ens ut habet simplicem suppositionem et supponit pro conceptu suo tantum non habet passiones per se inhaerentes ut subiecto: prout autem habet suppositionem personalem indeterminatam et supponit pro specialibus rationibus entium, licet indeterminate, sic habet passiones".

[43] *Ibid.* (p. 238), in particular: "Sed aliquae sunt passiones quae insunt omnibus entibus determinatis, sicut prius et posterius, actus et potentia, et huiusmodi. Igitur, tales passiones convenient enti inquantum ens habet suppositionem personalem. Et hoc voluerunt dicere omnes philosophi: quod ens inquantum ens habet passiones; non quod ens, inquantum stat pro suo conceptu simplici, habeat passiones quae sint extra eius conceptum (…), sed quia ens habet passiones quae aequant ambitum entis ut supponit indeterminate pro hoc ente vel pro illo".

[44] *Ibid.* (p. 240).

in fact lead to a "destruction", as it has been interpreted by Rupert Lay, in his dissertation on the doctrine of the transcendentals in Auriol, as "the categorialisation of the transcendental"; "the central statement" in Auriol's account would be that the transcendental "properties of being formally belong to the category of relation".[45] What is meant by the paradox of "the categorialisation of the transcendental", which is a paradox, as "transcendental" is always opposed to "categorial" in the Middle Ages? And is Lay's phrase a correct characterization of Auriol's position?

The opposition between categorial and transcendental is advanced by Auriol himself in his discussion of the "good". After having established that the concept of "good" formally consists in the *ratio* of "suitable" (*conveniens*), he raises a doubt. If the "good" is identical with "suitable", this notion does not belong to the transcendentals, for "suitable" indicates a relation, and relation is a determinate category. This consequence, however, contradicts Aristotle, who, in the first book of his *Ethics*, states that the good is found in all categories—an important historical source for the transcendentality of the good.[46]

Auriol's reply is based on a distinction he had introduced when dealing with the difficulty of the "destruction" of the transcendentals. The properties of being can be considered in two ways: formally and abstractly so that only their formal *ratio* is taken into consideration, or *subiective* and concretely, that is, with reference to the subject in which they are.[47] The distinction between "abstract" and "concrete" terms was not unusual in the doctrine of the transcendentals. As we observed in the chapter on Meister Eckhart (8.2.2), the focus of the thirteenth-century doctrine was on the concrete terms *ens, unum, verum* and

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[45] R. Lay, *Zur Lehre von den Transzendentalien bei Petrus Aureoli O.F.M.*, p. 195 and p. 239.

[46] Peter Auriol, *In II Sententiarum*, d. 35, q. unica, a. 1 (ed. Rome 1605, p. 296aC): "Secunda instantia est, quia tunc bonum non est de transcendentibus, quia per te est idem quod conveniens; conveniens autem est relatio, quae est praedicamentum determinatum; consequens autem est contra Aristotelem 10. Ethicorum, qui dicit, quod in omni praedicamento est bonum".

[47] Peter Auriol, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 2, p. 2, q. 1 (ed. Brown, p. 239): "Responsio: ad evidentiam istarum difficultatem sciendum quod passiones quae attribuuntur enti possunt considerari dupliciter, quia possunt accipi formaliter vel pro ipso substrato. Formaliter accipiuntur pro ipsarum formali ratione; pro substrato autem quando referuntur ad subiectum cui insunt". Cf. *In II Sententiarum*, d. 35, q. unica, a. 1 (ed. Rome 1605, p. 296aD): "(…) bonum formaliter in abstracto (…), bonum (…) in concreto enim accipitur subiective et denominative".

bonum, for they are convertible with one another, not, however, if the terms are taken "abstractly"—"unity" differs from "truth" and "goodness". Auriol adopts this distinction, but elaborates upon it in a new manner.

When the properties of being are taken "formally" without reference to their subject, they do not have the same extension as "being", but are rather some "particular entities". Auriol explains this with respect to disjunctive and convertible properties: "necessary" and "possible" indicate a relation, namely, between the essence of a thing and being (*esse*); "act" and "potency" are correlatives; "good" and "true" indicate relations, for "good" expresses "suitability", a relation to the appetite, and "true" expresses "manifestation", a relation to the intellect. Since all properties formally indicate relations, they are "special beings". Consequently, they are not formally transcendentals, but restricted to the category of relation.[48]

When, however, these properties are taken "concretely", thus with reference to the subject in which they are, they have the same extension as "being" and "go around" (*circumeunt*) all categories—the phrase "go around all categories" is the typical designation for transcendental terms in the thirteenth century. Accordingly, Auriol concludes that "necessary" and "possible", "act" and "potency", "good" and "true" are concretely transcendental.[49]

Auriol's reply to the doubt as to whether "the good" is categorial or transcendental repeats the distinction between the abstract and the concrete consideration of a transcendental property of being. "Goodness" taken abstractly is identical with "suitability" (*convenientia*) and

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[48] Peter Auriol, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 2, p. 2, q. 1 (ed. Brown, p. 239): "Tunc dico quod accipiendo talia formaliter, non aequantur enti; immo sunt quaedam particulares entitates sub ente contentae (…). Talia, igitur, cum videantur dicere formaliter relationes, videntur esse specialia entia". *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, n. 124 (ed. Buytaert, p. 516): "Sic igitur ista non sunt transcendentia formaliter, sed arctantur ad genus relationis".

[49] Peter Auriol, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 2, p. 2, q. 1 (ed. Brown, p. 239): "Si autem secundo modo accipiantur, in ordine ad subtratum sic adaequant rationem entis isto modo, quia circuunt omnia de quibus dicitur 'ens', quia de nullo est verum dicere quod sit ens de quo non dicantur talia, puta, actus vel potentia, necesse vel possibile, et huiusmodi". *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, n. 124 (ed. Buytaert, pp. 516–517): "Est autem considerandum quod omnia ista transcendentia (…) subiective autem et denominative circueunt omne genus (…); sunt tamen transcendentia materialiter, in quantum fundantur super omne quod reponitur [reperitur?] in quovis praedicamento".

is formally in the category of relation. But "good" taken concretely is in all categories and is properly transcendental. When Aristotle, in his *Ethics*, states that good is found in all categories, good must be taken in the latter sense.[50]

The phrase "categorialisation of the transcendental" does not appear to be an adequate characteristic of Auriol's position. Typical of his view is a new elaboration of the distinction between abstract and concrete transcendental terms against the background of the theory of supposition. This reorientation has the same motivation as that which lies behind his analysis of the first object of the intellect: the adaptation of what is most common and transcendental to an ontology of the singular thing.

10.1.4 *A new model: Connotative transcendentals*

In his last work (1320), the *Quodlibet*, Auriol advances a model for the relation between the convertible transcendentals and being that is new in the history of the doctrine. The context of this exposition is a critical discussion of the Scotist conception of the "formalities" in the first question of the *Quodlibet*: "Whether *formalitas* and *realitas* are distinguished in a thing?" Auriol does not restrict his reply to the theory in general, but also deals with two "special" cases, the transcendentals and the divine attributes—the two most important applications of the formal distinction in Scotism.[51] Here we are, of course, mainly interested in Auriol's "special" discussion of the transcendental notions "unity", "truth" and "goodness", in which, he observes, "the vestige" (*vestigium*) consists. He does not explain this remark, but it goes back to a typically Franciscan feature of the doctrine that he had

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[50] Peter Auriol, *In II Sententiarum*, d. 35, q. unica, a. 1 (ed. Rome 1605, p. 296aD): "quia bonitas in abstracto idem est quod convenientia, ideo formaliter illa est in praedicamento determinato, tamen illa est subiective in omni praedicamento, quia potest denominare concretive omne praedicamentum, et ideo bonum in concreto magis proprie est transcendens quam in abstracto"; *ibid.* (p. 296bB): "Ad aliud, quod adducitur ex Philosopho, quod bonum est in omni predicamento, dico eodem modo, quod verum est subiective, non formaliter". For the "good" in Auriol, cf. J. Uscatescu Barrón, "La teoría del bien transcendental en Pedro Auréolo en el contexto de su filosofía", in: *Faventia* 26 (2004), pp. 53–76. R. Darge, "*Omne ens est conveniens.* Ursprung und Entwicklung eines spätmittelalterlichen Neuansatzes der Theorie des ontischen Gutseins", in: *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 50 (2005), pp. 9–27; on Auriol pp. 16–20.

[51] Peter Auriol, *Quodlibet* I (ed. Rome 1605, pp. 2–8).

recalled in his *Scriptum*: the three transcendentals "one", "true" and "good" represent a vestige of the Trinity of the divine Persons in created things.[52]

1. Auriol's analysis starts with a summary of Scotus's view. Scotus was of the opinion that in one and the same simple thing there can be many "formalities", distinct from one another *ex natura rei*, which are also called "real modes" or "real *rationes*". He thinks such a formal distinction in a thing is necessary for an objective foundation of the different concepts we form of one and the same thing.[53] The application of the "formalist" doctrine to the transcendentals means that they, though really identical, differ quidditatively and *ex natura rei*. Otherwise it would be a useless repetition of the same (*nugatio*) to say that being is one, true and good. Another Scotist argument for the necessity of the formal distinction, to which Auriol refers, is the possibility of metaphysics as a "real science" (*realis scientia*): metaphysics does not consider second order concepts, "second intentions", but real *rationes*, namely, the transcendental properties of being.[54]

Auriol's general objection to Scotus's acceptance of many real modes or forms in one and the same simple thing is that it implies a contradiction, because one thing would at the same time be many things or essences and thus loose its unity. His special conclusion concerning the transcendentals is that the application of the formal distinction to unity, truth and goodness would lead to absurd consequences.

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[52] *Ibid.*, a. 1 (ed. Roma 1605, p. 2bF): "Secundo vero probabitur in speciali de rationibus transcendentalibus [*corrige*: transcendentibus], in quibus vestigium consistit, scilicet de veritate, unitate et bonitate". Cf. *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 3, sect. 13 (ed. Buytaert, pp. 667–688): "Utrum per rationem vestigii in creaturis reperti possit declarari trinitas personarum".

[53] Peter Auriol, *Quodlibet* I, a. 1 (ed. Rome 1605, p. 2bB–E): "Fuit quorundam opinio (Scotus, In I Sent., d. 8, q. 4) quod in eadem re simplici possunt esse plures formalitates distinctae ex natura rei et aliqui vocauerunt eas 'modos reales', aliqui 'rationes reales', aliqui 'intentiones', aliqui 'quidditativas rationes' et omnes idem exprimere intendunt. (…) constat quod de eadem re simplici possunt haberi plures conceptus obiectivi (…); ergo necesse est ponere [quod] (…) in eadem re simplici est aliud et aliud obiectum intellectus formale. Hoc autem appellatur 'intentio' sive 'quidditativa ratio' sive 'ratio realis'".

[54] *Ibid.* (pp. 2bF–3aA): "Sed manifestum est, quod istae rationes, in quibus consistit vestigium, etsi sunt idem re tamen distinguuntur in illa quidditative et ex natura rei. Alioquin esset nugatio dicendo ens unum et verum et bonum. Et rursum non pertine[n]t ad realem scientiam, videlicet ad metaphysicam, quae non considerat secundas intentiones, sed veras rationes reales, tractat enim de passionibus entibus".

Auriol demonstrates this with respect to each transcendental notion separately. In each case the argument is similar; exemplary is his argument with regard to "unity".

If unity were a positive *ratio* distinct from the thing which is one, then it would follow that something is one without unity and that there would be an infinite process in the explanation of its unity. For according to the adherents of the formal distinction the *ratio* of something, say of a stone, is really different from the *ratio* of its unity. Thus there are two distinct positive *rationes*. "But it is impossible that they are two, unless each of them is one, since the number two is composed of unities". Hence, the *ratio* of the concrete being is one, so that it is distinguished from the *ratio* of unity. "It will thus be one without unity (*una sine unitate*)".[55] We can go on asking whether the *ratio* of stone which is posited to be one is one through another *ratio* distinct from it. If this were the case, we would proceed into infinity with the result that there would be a plurality of unities in each thing that is one.[56]

Auriol presents a strong criticism of Scotus's doctrine. The transcendental properties cannot be conceived as formally or really distinct from being, for the formal distinction already presupposes the transcendental determination of what is distinct from it. The transcendental perspective cannot be formally separated from the *ratio* of the concrete being.

2. Auriol proposes another interpretation of the relation of the transcendentals "one", "true" and "good" to "being", the connotation model. Connotative concepts have a primary meaning or content, which they signify *in recto*, and a secondary meaning, which they signify *in obliquo*. Connotation is the cornerstone in Auriol's doctrine of the transcendentals, not only because it offers an alternative to the formal distinction of the Scotists but also because it is linked with

[55] *Ibid.*, a. 2 (p. 4bD–E): "Si enim unitas importaret rationem conceptibilem positivam distinctam ab illa re, quae est una (…) sequeretur quod aliquod esset unum sine unitate et quod procederetur in infinitum. In rationibus unitatum hoc patet, quia ratio quam importat res per te est aliqua [*leg.*: alia] positive a ratione quam importat unitas et econverso. Sunt ergo duae rationes positive distinctae. Impossibile est autem, quod sint duae nisi quaelibet sit una, cum numerus binarius ex unitatibus componatur. Ergo ratio entis est una, ut distinguitur a ratione unitatis et ut praescinditur ab ea, alias non erunt duae distinctae. Erit ergo una sine unitate".

[56] *Ibid.*

central aspects of his thought—the indeterminate concept of "being" and the idea of "objective being".[57]

"One", "true" and "good" are convertible with "being" and differ from it, for "one" signifies "that which is undivided", "true" signifies "that which moves the intellect", and "good" signifies "that which moves the will". This plurality of concepts of one and the same thing does not require, as the formalist position assumes, a plurality in the thing itself; the plurality rather concerns the thing as conceived, that is, its "conceived" or "apparent being", which is the terminating object of the intellect. The same thing can be conceived confusedly and determinately.[58] This idea is reflected in Auriol's interpretation of the transcendentals as connotative concepts.

The three convertible transcendentals do not signify some determinate concept *in recto*; their primary meaning is the wholly indeterminate *ratio* of "being", expressed by the phrase "that which" in the above descriptions of "one", "true" and "good". When these three are applied to some entity, they principally and *in recto* coincide with that being, both really and conceptually, and do not add a real inner mode or *ratio* to that thing.[59] As far as the principal concept is concerned, there is identity between the transcendentals.

These notions, however, differently determine "being" *in obliquo*, i.e. by that which they connote. The implicit concept of "being" is not only explicated by the special meanings of things, but also determined by the transcendental concepts, for "unity" connotes "indivision", "truth" connotes "the motion of the intellect" and "goodness" connotes the motion of the appetite. The difference between the transcendentals does not consist in any intrinsic distinction but only in what

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[57] The main text on *transcendentia* as connotative concepts is *Quodlibet* I, a. 2 (ed. Rome 1605, p. 5aC–b B). Cf. *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 3, sect. 13, nn. 53–64 (ed. Buytaert, pp. 681–686); d. 8, sect. 23, nn. 60–67 (pp. 987–991); *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 2, p. 2, q. 1 (ed. Brown, pp. 238–239).

[58] This is Auriol's concluding observation in his general discussion of Scotus's opinion in *Quodlibet* I, a. 3 (ed. Rome 1605, p. 6bE–F).

[59] Peter Auriol, *Quodlibet* I, a. 2 (ed. Rome 1605, p. 5aD–F): "Sed verum, unum, bonum, sumpta generaliter et in communi, nullam rationem determinatam important principaliter et in recto, sed tantummodo in obliquo. (…) in recto autem [exprimitur] indeterminatus conceptus entis tantummodo, quem importat (…) 'illud quod'. (…) igitur est verum, quod haec tria applicata ad quamcumque entitatem coincidunt in idem re et ratione principaliter et in recto, nec addunt modum aut rationem realem intrinsece".

they connote extrinsically (*in extrinseco connotato*) as a result of an external relation. The "true rule of these transcendentals" (*vera regula istorum transcendentium*), Auriol concludes, is that they include only the concept of "being" *in recto*, but always remain distinct in what they connote.[60]

But is this conclusion not a reversion back to the position of those who hold that there is only a conceptual difference between the transcendentals, because "connotation" seems to refer to an act of the intellect? The connotation model would be a reversion back to the view that was current in the thirteenth century. Auriol denies this implication and rejects the assumption that connotation must be understood *ex parte intellectus*. When a thing is conceived under the aspect of "true", it is rather *ex parte rei* that the concept of this thing expresses "the motion of the intellect" as something that can arise from it.[61]

Finally Auriol establishes that the two arguments advanced by Scotists for the necessity of a formal distinction between the transcendentals likewise hold for his own position. Although these notions do not really differ from "being", it is not "nugatory" to say that being is one, true and good, for what the latter three notions connote extrinsically prevents a useless repetition of the same. Furthermore, a science that considers the transcendental connotative concepts can be a real science (*scientia realis*), for these notions are not based on second intentions, like the concepts of genus and species.[62] What Auriol presents really is an alternative doctrine of the transcendentals.

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[60] *Ibid.* (p. 5bA–B): "(…) et tota diversitas est in extrinseco connotato, scilicet in indivisione, motione intellectus et motione appetitus. Et haec est vera regula istorum transcendentium, in quibus consistit vestigium, et prout accipiuntur generaliter et in communi, nullam determinatam rationem important in recto, sed solum conceptum entis includunt, et tota determinatio est in extrinseco et connotato. Cum autem applicantur ad rem aliquam, coincidunt in illam re et ratione in recto et principaliter, retinent autem semper definitionem [*leg.*: distinctionem] in connotato".

[61] Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 3, sect. 13, n. 55 (ed. Buytaert, p. 682) and n. 60 (p. 684).

[62] Peter Auriol, *Quodlibet* I, a. 3 (ed. Rome 1605, pp. 6bF–7aB): "Dicendum quod sicut non differunt realiter ab ente, in quo sunt, sic nec differunt ratione intrinsece et in recto, sed tantum extrinsece (…). Nec tamen erit nugatio, quia exteriora connotata tollunt nugationem ab eo, quod accidit enti indiviso huic totalitati, quod sit ens motivum intellectus (…) et totum hoc est ratione connotati. Similiter etiam realis scientia potest esse de talibus conceptibus, qui sic in generali differunt sicut unum et verum et bonum, non quidem in recto, sed in connotato. Nec tales conceptus sunt secundae intentiones; non enim sunt conceptus fundati super alios conceptus sicut conceptus generis et speciei".

10.2 Francis of Meyronnes: *Tractatus de transcendentibus*

Francis of Meyronnes (or: de Mayronis, d. 1328) studied under Scotus in Paris from 1304 to 1307, read the *Sentences* in Paris in the academic year 1320–21, and became master of theology in 1323. His commentary on the *Sentences* was one of the most popular commentaries of the period; it exists in several versions, of which the main one is named *Conflatus*. Meyronnes was called the "Prince of Scotists" (*princeps scotistarum*) by sixteenth-century authors, and not without reason for he devoted separate tracts to central aspects of Scotist metaphysics; he composed works on "univocity", "perfection", and the *formalitates*.[63] We will focus on his *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, not only because it probably is the first separate treatise on this topic in the Middle Ages, but also because a special historical significance has been attributed to this work, since it would have extended the notion of "transcendental" to "second intentions" or logical beings.[64] The treatise is one of Meyronnes's late works, datable ca. 1327/8, and is likely to be earlier than the contemporary *Tractatus de sex transcendentibus*, composed by the Dominican Francis of Prato (*floruit* between 1330 and 1345).

The concept of transcendentality

The *Tractatus de transcendentibus* consists of eight articles:

Art. 1: *quid est transcendens?*
Art. 2: *quae sunt proprietates transcendentium?*
Art. 3: *quot sunt modi transcendentium?*
Art. 4: *si omnia sunt simpliciter simplicia?*
Art. 5: *si omnia sunt primo diversa?*
Art. 6: *si includuntur quidditative in aliquo inferiori?*

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[63] On Francis's writings and thought: B. Roth, *Franz von Mayronis O.F.M. Sein Leben, seine Werke, seine Lehre vom Formalunterschied in Gott*, Werl 1936 (Franziskanische Forschungen, 3). For an analysis of his dicussion of the univocity of being in the prologue to the *Conflatus*, cf. H. Möhle, *Formalitas und modus intrinsecus. Die Entwicklung der scotischen Metaphysik bei Franciscus de Mayronis*, Münster 2007 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. Neue Folge, 70).

[64] The treatise has been edited by H. Möhle, *Der 'Tractatus de transcendentibus' des Franciscus de Mayronis*, Leuven 2004 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales. Bibliotheca, 7), with a substantial introduction, pp. 3–101.

Art. 7: *si aliquod superius dicitur de istis transcendentibus?*
Art. 8: *si ista transcendentia, quae convertuntur cum ente, sunt omnino idem cum ente?*[65]

The treatise as a whole is rather disappointing; it offers no more than a schematic outline of the doctrine and little argumentation. Francis does not place the doctrine into a broader philosophical framework in order to clarify its systematic importance. Yet the *Tractatus* contains a number of interesting elements, which reflect Scotus's transformation of the concept of transcendentality.

1. Meyronnes chooses as a motto for his work the text (cf. Matth. 23,15) "*Circuivi mare et aridam*" ("I went around sea and land"). The text has a programmatic meaning, insofar as it expresses the traditional and the innovative aspect of the treatise. The phrase *circuivi* refers to a typical term of the transcendental theory; it was used by several authors in the thirteenth century, like Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, to express the commonness of what is *transcendens*, but also by Peter Auriol and Meyronnes himself: "what goes around every genus is transcendental".[66] The phrase *mare et aridam* indicates the twofold range of transcendental predicates: "land" refers to the categorical order they traverse; "sea" to the extension of these predicates to the "sea (*pelagus*) of infinite perfection"—one of Scotus's innovations.[67] The expression *pelagus infinitae perfectionis* is a clear reminiscence of a statement by John Damascene in his work *De fide orthodoxa* (I, c. 9), which was often cited in medieval discussions on the divine names. According to Damascene "He who is" is the principal of all names said of God, for "comprehending all in itself, it contains being itself as an infinite and indeterminate sea of substance" (*pelagus substantiae infinitum et indeterminatum*).[68]

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[65] Francis of Meyronnes, *Tractatus de transcendentibus* (ed. Möhle, pp. 105–106).
[66] Cf. Francis's observation in the *Conflatus*, d. 8, q. 1 (ed. Venice 1520, fol. 43rb–vaH–I): "Quicquid circuit omne genus est transcendens, quia illud quod est in aliquo genere non potest omne genus circuire".
[67] Francis of Meyronnes, *Tractatus de transcendentibus* (ed. Möhle, p. 105): "'Circuivi mare et aridam', Mt. 23. Quia praedicata transcendentia non solum aridam praedicamentalis coordinationis, sed etiam pelagus infinitae perfectionis circumeunt, idcirco ad eorum faciliorem investigationem convenienter assumitur verbum illud".
[68] Cf., for instance, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 13, a. 11.

2. In the first art., Francis raises the general question "What is *transcendens*?" The common opinion holds that only that which goes around every genus is transcendental, such as the *ratio* of "being" and its properties.[69] In the terminology of the motto of the treatise: some people (*aliqui*) restrict the range of the transcendental predicates to the "land" of the categorial order. But as the motto has already suggested, this view is too narrow.

Francis presents two counter arguments, but does not elaborate upon them so that they have rather the character of a claim than of an argument: all that is formally infinite is *transcendens*, although none of them goes around every genus; and "nothing but that which is *transcendens* is in God" (*nihil est in deo nisi transcendens*).[70] His objections to the common opinion concern the two main innovations in Scotus's conception, the inclusion of the divine and the notion of a "pure perfection". Francis sustains the claim "nothing but that which is *transcendens* is in God" by a reference to *De divinis nominibus* of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite—nota bene the work that was the major channel by which the Neoplatonic idea of (divine) transcendence was transmitted to the Middle Ages (see ch. 1.3). Meyronnes is one of the few fourteenth-century authors who commented on the Dionysian *corpus*.

He concludes that *transcendens* is "what is not in a determinate genus, but abstracts (*abstrahunt*) from any categorial content (*ratio*)".[71] Francis's definition is typical of the negative understanding of transcendentality in Scotus. It is true that what goes around every genus is transcendental, yet the reverse does not hold. Commonness is not a necessary condition of transcendentality, but the negation of categorial determination.

Yet the discontinuity with the thirteenth-century conceptions of what is transcendental should not be overstressed. The editor of the

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[69] Francis of Meyronnes, *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, a. 1 (ed. Möhle, p. 107): "Circa quem articulum dicunt aliqui et communiter quod transcendens est illud solum quod circuit omne genus, sicut ratio entis et passionum suarum".

[70] *Ibid.* (pp. 107–108): "Sed contra istud arguitur tum quia omnia quae sunt infinita formaliter sunt transcendentia et tamen nullum talium circuit omne genus. Tum quia nihil est in deo nisi transcendentia (*leg.*: transcendens)—secundum beatum Dionysium De Divinis Nominibus (…)".

[71] *Ibid.* (p. 108): "Ideo dico quod transcendentia sunt illa quae non sunt in aliquo genere determinato, sed abstrahunt ab omni ratione praedicamentali quia omnia talia excedunt praedicamentalem coordinationem".

Tractatus suggests that Meyronnes has an "aversion" to a doctrine of the transcendentals, which is oriented towards the criterion of convertibility and an extensional understanding of transcendentality, characteristic of thirteenth-century conceptions.[72] But neither in Meyronnes nor in the Scotist tradition in general do we observe an "aversion" to the convertible transcendentals and from commonness as a condition of transcendentality. The convertible transcendentals are seen as an integral part of the doctrine; a substantial part of Francis's *Tractatus* deals with these notions. Peter Thomae, in the prologue to his work *De ente*, assigns a fundamental place to the *transcendentia* as the *communissima*, because they are the precondition for the acquisition of any knowledge (see 10.3.1). The thirteenth-century conception of transcendentality is not purely extensional either, as we have seen. Being is the first conception of the intellect, and the other transcendentals explicate inner "modes of being".

3. Can the notion of *transcendens* also be defined in a more positive manner? In the second art. of his treatise, Francis examines "the properties" (*proprietates*) of transcendentals. He enumerates four features: transcendentals are (i) that which is formally in God, since this transcends the nature of every genus, (ii) that which does not include any imperfection in itself, but rather is a "pure" perfection; (iii) that which does not express a limited perfection, because such a limited perfection does not abstract from finite and infinite; and (iv) that which is more common than the categories, since it transcends them.[73]

Francis advances counter examples to each of these properties. (i) The notion "finite" is transcendental, because it belongs to all predicaments, and yet is not formally in God. (ii) The relation of the creature to God is transcendental, although it includes the aspect of dependency and imperfection. (iii) The notion of "accident" is transcendental, because it belongs to nine categories, and yet indicates a limited perfection. (iv) "Absolute" and "relative" are transcendental, because they are common to several categories, and yet not to all of the ten genera.[74]

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[72] H. Möhle, *Der 'Tractatus de transcendentibus' des Franciscus de Mayronis*, "Einleitung", pp. 36–39 and p. 67.

[73] Francis of Meyronnes, *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, a. 2 (ed. Möhle, pp. 112–113).

[74] *Ibid.* (pp. 113–114).

From these objections Francis concludes the inadequacy of the enumerated properties, although they are commonly accepted. Apparently, they do not belong to each single transcendental, but only to some of them. He next posits two other properties that actually extend to all transcendental notions: "no transcendental can be separated from that in which it is formally", and "no transcendental really differs from its foundation" (*fundamentum*).[75] Francis does not explain these claims. His search for a more positive determination of *transcendens* ends in two formal properties in which the notion is stripped of content (such as perfection, commonness or what is formally said of God).

4. In the third art. of his *Tractatus*, Francis of Meyronnes advances an idea that only makes sense in the Scotist conception. It is the idea of "degrees" (*gradus*) of transcendentality: some terms are "more transcendental" than others. He presents a number of orders or "modes of transcendentals", which show his mania for schemes with four terms—a fifteenth-century Scotist, William of Vaurillon, already noted with some irony that Francis always spoke "*in quaternitate*".[76] An example is his first ordering of transcendental notions, based on the degree of their commonness in comparison to the categories. He distinguishes (i) what is less common than one single category, such as "wisdom"; (ii) what is adequate to one category, such as "substance"; (iii) what is common to several categories, such as "absolute"; and (iv) what is common to all categories, such as "being" and the properties convertible with it.[77]

At the end of this art., Francis concludes that some notions are transcendental *propter communitatem*, some *propter sublimitatem*, and others because of both reasons.[78] This conclusion reveals the latent ambiguity in Scotus's conception of transcendentality. It turns out that

[75] *Ibid.* (pp. 114–115): "Ideo dico quod, licet istae proprietates sint communiter concessae, non tamen sunt transcendentibus adaequatae, licet bene conveniant nonnullis transcendentibus, non tamen singulo omnibus. Idcirco ponuntur duae proprietates quae omnibus trancendentibus sunt convenientes. Quarum prima est quod nullum transcendens potest separari ab eo in quo est formaliter (…). Secunda proprietas est quod nullum transcendens differt realiter a suo fundamento".

[76] Cf. B. Roth, *Franz von Mayronis O.F.M.*, p. 88.

[77] Francis of Meyronnes, *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, a. 3 (ed. Möhle, pp. 117–118).

[78] *Ibid.* (p. 124): "(…) aliqua sunt transcendentia propter communitatem sicut relatio creaturae; aliqua propter sublimitatem sicut paternitas quae invenitur in deo; aliqua propter utrumque sicut ratio veri et boni".

the conception is based on two quite different kinds of transcending: one surpasses what is categorial by the commonness of predication, the other by the eminence of being. The two meanings of the medieval term *transcendens,* transcendent and transcendental, are united in one concept.

5. The fourth and fifth art. apply typically Scotist notions to the transcendentals as such. Art. 4 asks: "Whether all transcendentals are 'irreducibly simple' (*simpliciter simplicia*)?" In the context of his discussion on the first object of the intellect in the order of origin (see ch. 9.4.2), Scotus had argued that "being" is an irreducibly simple concept that cannot be resolved into prior concepts; hence it cannot be conceived confusedly, and is what is first distinctly known. Meyronnes concludes that "no *ratio transcendens* can be resolved (*resolubilis*) into a quidditative *ratio*".[79] Art. 5 raises the question "Whether all transcendentals are 'primarily diverse' (*primo diversa*)?" Scotus had used this notion when showing that "being" cannot be predicated *in quid* of the ultimate differences, since these are "primarily diverse" and thus have nothing in common (see ch. 9.4.4). Francis draws the general conclusion that all *transcendentia* are "primarily diverse according to their quiddities".[80]

6. The last article of the treatise (art. 8) deals with the transcendentals that are convertible with "being" (*ens*). It thus represents the second element of Francis's motto "I went around sea and land", that is, the traditional aspect of the doctrine. The art. is the most extensive one of the entire *Tractatus*, covering more than a fourth of the text, and shows that this type of transcendental has not lost its significance in Scotism.[81]

Francis lists six convertible transcendentals, a number that always betrays the influence of Aquinas's account in *De veritate: ens*, which is "the root and foundation (*radix et fundamentum*)" of the other determinations *res, aliquid, unum, bonum* and *verum*. The article examines the relations between them and formulates two general conclusions. The first of them concerns their identity: these notions are really indistinct (*realiter indistincta*); in this respect Francis agrees with the

[79] *Ibid.*, a. 4 (p. 127).
[80] *Ibid.*, a. 5 (p. 137).
[81] *Ibid.*, a. 8 (pp. 152–168): "[S]i illa transcendentia quae cum ente convertuntur sunt omnino idem re cum ente?"

thirteenth-century doctrine. But concerning the non-identity of these transcendentals Scotism maintains a different view to the traditional one. Francis's second conclusion is that these notions are distinct by a distinction "that is not fabricated by our mind (*non fabricata ab anima nostra*)".[82] "Being" and the convertible transcendentals do not differ from one another merely by a "conceptual" difference, but by a "formal" distinction.

Meyronnes problematizes the relation of each particular convertible transcendental to "being" by raising twelve "difficulties" (*difficilia*). Of special interest is the third difficulty, which is concerned with the addition of *res* or *realitas* to "being". What "thing" adds is not a formality, a quidditative determination, but an "intrinsic mode" (*modus intrinsecus*), namely, that of actual existence. Whereas for Aquinas the term *ens* is taken from *esse*, signifying the "act of being", and the term *res* refers to the quidditative moment, "reality" is understood by Francis as expressing the mode of actuality. The distinction between *ens* and *res* is thus not "formal", but "modal". The consequence of this interpretation is that *res* is not convertible with "being", taken according to its entire extension, but only with "being" in act. In this respect "thing" differs from all other transcendentals. Meyronnes refers to the *Doctor solemnis*, that is, to Henry of Ghent, who would have maintained that the *ratitudo*, from which the term "reality" is taken, only belongs to things existing in act—an incorrect reference, since Henry teaches that *res* in the sense of *ratitudo* signifies a quiddity *capable* to actual existence.[83] The incorporation of "thing" into the doctrine of the transcendentals also remains in Francis problematic.

Extension of what is transcendental to the "second intentions"?

The modern editor of the *Tractatus* suggests that Meyronnes goes beyond Scotus's conception by extending the class of transcendental predicates to the *intentiones secundae*, the (logical) concepts of

[82] *Ibid.* (pp. 153–154).

[83] *Ibid.* (pp. 158–159): "Tertium difficile est: quid addit realitas ad ens? Dicitur quod est modus intrinsecus eius sicut existentia quidditatis (…). Et secundum hoc ista realitas non convertitur cum ente secundum totam suam latitudinem, sed solum cum ente in actu (…). Non sic autem est de aliis transcendentibus quae conveniunt enti tam in actu quam in potentia. Et ratio huius est quia secundum Doctorem Solemnem ratitudo a qua realitas dicitur non competit nisi rebus existentibus in actu vel in effectu".

concepts of the first intention. The extension meant a step towards what he calls the "subjectivizing" of what is transcendental, that is, the recognition of the relationship between human subjectivity and transcendentality. This development had an effect on metaphysics conceived as "transcendental science". This science makes the concepts and principles that are constitutive of any knowledge to its object of inquiry. In this way an understanding of metaphysics was prepared that closes the gap between the medieval and the modern transcendental science.[84] This interpretation rests, however, in my view on a misunderstanding.

The main text advanced for the claim that Francis teaches the transcendental character of the second intentions is art. 6 of his *Tractatus.* There, he explicitly states that some *transcendentia* are in a sense more common than "being", such as the concept of *universalis* and of *transcendens*. At the same time he underlines that these concepts are not quidditatively included in something because they are "second intentions", which do not express a quidditative concept of a first intention.[85]

In other places in the *Tractatus* we encounter the same ideas. In the previous art. 5, Francis had raised as an objection to the claim that all transcendentals are "primarily diverse" the argument that the convertible properties of being agree in the formal *ratio* of *transcendens* and *universalis*, and thus are not primarily diverse. In his reply, Meyronnes emphasizes that the diversity at stake concerns the quidditative predication, not the denominative one, because what is said in the latter manner is added (*adiuncta*) to something. The concept of *transcendens*, however, is said denominatively of the convertible attributes of being.[86] In the seventh art. ("Whether there is something higher that is said *in quid* of the transcendentals?"), Francis establishes that what is higher are only second intentions. The transcendentals convertible

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[84] H. Möhle, *Der 'Tractatus de transcendentibus' des Franciscus de Mayronis,* "Einleitung", pp. 67–69. Cf. id., *Formalitas und modus intrinsecus,* p. 347.

[85] Francis of Meyronnes, *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, a. 6 (ed. Möhle, p. 140): "Prima [conclusio] est quod transcendentia illa quae sunt aliquomodo ente communiora, sicut ratio universalis et transcendentis, non includuntur quidditative in aliquo quia omnia illa pertinent ad rationem secundarum intentionum. Secundae autem intentiones non dicunt conceptum quidditativum alicuius primae". Cf. H. Möhle, *Der 'Tractatus de transcendentibus'*, "Einleitung", pp. 47–51.

[86] Francis of Meyronnes, *Tractatus de transcendentibus*, a. 5 (ed. Möhle, pp. 135–6).

with being do not receive the quidditative predication of something higher since the concept of "being" is what is most common and is in the order of the first intentions.[87]

From these texts we can draw some conclusions. One is that the concept of *transcendens* itself is a second intention and reckoned among the *transcendentia*. The doctrine of the transcendentals implies not only an ontological *transcensus*, the surpassing of the categorial determinations, but also a logical one, the surpassing of the Porphyrian predicables. In his commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge*, Meyronnes distinguishes between *praedicabilia limitata*, the domain of the genera and species, and the *transcendentia*. The view that the concept of *transcendens* is a second intention is in conformity with Scotus's endeavor to add to the five Porphyrian predicables or universals related to the categories another predicable that he calls *universale transcendens* (see ch. 9.3.2).

But the fact that the concept of *transcendens* is a second intention does not mean that the reverse applies, that is, that second intentions as such are transcendental and that Meyronnes extends the doctrine of the transcendentals to second intentions. He asserts that some second intentions are more common than "being", such as the *ratio* of *transcendens* and the notion of "absolute perfection", which is common to being and its properties.[88] But Meyronnes clearly distinguishes their commonness from the quidditative transcendental notions that are first intentions, among which "being" is most common and primary. This opinion is no innovation of the *Tractatus* or the expression of a new tendency. Ideas similar to those of Meyronnes are found in contemporaries, for instance, in the Scotist Peter Thomae. He wonders whether an absolute perfection is more common than "being", because it belongs to many other things distinct from being, such as "true" and "good". Peter replies that nothing can be more transcendental (*transcendentior*) than being unless by commonness of name. It is true that some second intentions, for example, *transcendentia*, are common to the transcendentals, but a second intention is not common to them in

[87] *Ibid.*, a. 7 (p. 146): "Prima [conclusio] est quod transcendentia quae cum ente convertuntur non recipiunt alicuius superioris praedicationem quidditativam quia nullum habent superius nisi secundarum intentionum cum ratio entis sit communissima et in ordine primarum intentionum".

[88] The example of the concept of "absolute perfection" is given in *ibid.*, a. 3 (p. 121).

the way the higher is common to what is lower, that is, in a quidditative sense.[89]

That these views were current is also illustrated by the work we discussed in chapter I, the *Declaratio difficilium terminorum* written by Armand de Bellovisu around 1326. He divides the main treatise of his work according to the distinction between names of the first intentions and names of the second intention. Armand first deals with names of the first intention that signify a general mode of being, consequent to every being, and are called *transcendentia*. The explanation of the meaning of the term *transcendens* itself comes only in the second part, which deals with names of the second intention. In the light of all these facts one cannot interpret Meyronnes's inclusion of the concept of *transcendens* into the class of transcendental predicates as a new development.

Another text that has been advanced for the claim that Meyronnes attributes a transcendental character to the "second intentions" is q. 8 in the prologue of his commentary on the *Sentences*, named *Conflatus*: "Whether a common concept can be abstracted from concepts that are irreducibly simple and primarily diverse?" Francis's reply is, of course, negative—conceptual agreement is incompatible with conceptual diversity—, to which he adds that the impossibility of a common concept must be understood in the sense of a quidditative concept.[90]

Francis then presents four classes of concepts that can be predicated of ultimate differences and illustrates each class with examples: (i) "second intentions" (*secundae intentiones*): from various ultimate differences "this" (*hoc*) a common concept of "ultimate difference" can be abstracted; (ii) "the most common properties" (*communissimae passiones*): "truth" and "goodness" can be predicated of ultimate differences, for all of them are intelligible (*intelligibiles*) and objects of the will (*volibiles*); (iii) "transcendental relations" (*habitudines* or *rela-*

[89] Petrus Thomae, *Quodlibet*, q. 1, a. 3 (ed. M. R. Hooper / E. M. Buytaert, St. Bonaventure, N.Y.-Louvain-Paderborn 1957 (Franciscan Institute Publications. Text Series, 11), p. 14): "Secundum dubium est, utrum perfectio simpliciter est communior et maior ente et convertibilibus cum eo"; (p. 19): "Ad secundum dubium, dico quod perfectio simpliciter non est communior vel transcendentior ipso ente vel cum eo convertibilibus: impossibile enim est esse aliquid transcendentius ipso ente". (p. 23): "Sed suntne aliquae secundae intentiones communes transcendentibus? Potest dici quod sic, puta transcendentia, non tamen quod ista secunda intentio sit communis eis sicut superius inferioribus".

[90] Francis of Meyronnes, *Conflatus*, prol., q. 8 (ed. Venice 1520, fol. 6vbP–Q).

tiones transcendentes), such as "diversity" and "distinction" that can be predicated of ultimate differences; (iv) "privations" (*privationes*), such as "unity" that is univocally predicated of many things that are primarily diverse.[91]

Francis raises one single difficulty with respect to this presentation: if a property (*passio*) belongs to a plurality of things, it seems that it belongs to them through a common *ratio*. If these properties therefore belong to a plurality of things that are primarily diverse, these things will no longer be primarily diverse. In his reply, Francis maintains that the argument is true in *non-transcendentibus* but false in transcendentals, for the latter notions do not belong to all things by means of a common concept unless perhaps by the concept of "being", which is in all things, not quidditative but in some of them *denominative* and in others *quidditative*.[92]

It has been suggested that the reply to the objection presupposes that all four classes of concepts, including the "second intentions", have a transcendental character.[93] But this presupposition is by no means evident: the objection could very well refer only to the second class of concepts, the transcendental properties convertible with being. It is highly unlikely that the second intentions as such, illustrated in the present text by the concept of "ultimate difference", are transcendental; the predicables "genus" and "species", for instance, are related to the categorial order and are therefore called *praedicabilia limitata* by Meyronnes.

10.3 Peter Thomae: "*Scotizare*" on being and the transcendentals

After his studies in Paris, the Spanish Franciscan Peter Thomae (d. 1340) became lector at the *studium generale* of his Order in Barcelona by 1316, where he taught for a decade. Typical of Thomae's philosophical attitude is the expression *scotizare* that he introduces. Against

[91] Francis of Meyronnes, *Conflatus*, prol., q. 8 (ed. Venice 1520, fol. 6vbQ–7raA).

[92] *Ibid.* (fol. 7raA): "Respondeo, dico quod ista vera est in non-transcendentibus, sed falsa est in transcendentibus; non enim transcendentia insint omnibus mediante aliqua ratione communi nisi forte mediante ratione entis quae inest omnibus, sed non quidditative sed denominative et aliquibus aliis quidditative".

[93] H. Möhle, *Der 'Tractatus de transcendentibus'*, "Einleitung", p. 48; id., *Formalitas und modus intrinsecus*, p. 198.

his own conclusion that being (*ens*) is not predicated *in quid* of *any* difference he raises the objection "You do not scoticize (*Tu non scotizas*)", for Scotus himself only maintains that being is not predicated in this manner of *ultimate* differences.[94] Peter's intention is to explain the Subtle Doctor's positions on the univocity and transcendentality of being and to defend them against contemporaries. His main target is Auriol, who had questioned central aspects of Scotus's doctrine; Thomae critically discusses Auriol's alternative views on the unity of the concept of "being", the convertible transcendentals, and the object of the intellect. But he also attacks "halfway Scotists" (*aliqualiter scotizantes*), among whom he seems to count William of Alnwick.[95] Yet Peter is not a slavish follower of Scotus, but sometimes criticizes the Master and goes beyond him by developing a new logic of the transcendentals.

De ente *or* De transcendentibus

Peter's work *De ente* is the most extensive account of transcendental being in the fourteenth century. It is a collection of questions that are the product of disputations held in the *studium generale* in Barcelona. *De ente* is still unedited, which causes a serious lacuna in the history of the doctrine of the transcendentals in the era after Scotus.[96] Peter also refers to this work as *De transcendentibus*, and the reason for this title becomes apparent from the prologue, in which he assigns a fundamental epistemological place to the transcendentals. Knowledge of the *communia*, it is argued, is a precondition for knowledge of the *propria*. Since *transcendentia* are the *communissima*, it is "opportune" for the acquisition of any knowledge whatsoever to deal with them. Among the transcendentals being itself (*ens ipsum*) has the first and principal place, and the concept of being should therefore be examined first.[97] Peter realized only this first part of the project.

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[94] Petrus Thomae, *Quaestiones de ente*, q. 13 (ed. S. D. Dumont, in: "The univocity of the Concept of Being in the Fourteenth Century: II. The *De ente* of Peter Thomae", in: *Mediaeval Studies* 50 (1988), pp. 186–256, here p. 234): "Contra: tu non scotizas, nam Scotus ponit quod tantum de ultima differentia non praedicatur ens in eo quod quid".

[95] Petrus Thomae, *De ente*, q. 11 (cited by S. D. Dumont, in: "The univocity of the Concept of Being in the Fourteenth Century: II", p. 188, nt. 7).

[96] Only q. 13 has been edited by S. D. Dumont ("The Univocity of the Concept of Being in the Fourteenth Century: II", pp. 218–256).

[97] Cf. E. Buytaert, "The Scholastic Writings of Petrus Thomae", in: J. Auer / H. Volk (eds.), *Theologie in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Festschrift für Michael Schmaus*,

De ente comprises fifteen questions. From the table of questions in the prologue it is evident that their main concern is Scotus's doctrine of the univocity of the concept of "being" and the univocal predication of being.[98] Thomae examines whether the concept of being is one solely "through the unity of equivocation" (q. 8), "through the unity of confusion" (q. 9) or "through the unity of univocity" (q. 10). He criticizes Auriol's position that the concept of "being" does not have one determinate *ratio* but is fully indeterminate and possesses only a "unity of confusion". Q. 11 ("Whether the univocity of the concept of being is real?") discusses one of the fundamental difficulties in Scotus's doctrine: How can there be a common concept of what is wholly diverse in reality? Thomae argues that there is a real (and not a purely rational) unity corresponding to the univocal concept of "being". The common concept must be real, otherwise metaphysics were not a real science, and the intellect would have no real adequate object.[99] Because of the distance between real being and being of reason Peter denies the possibility of a concept of being univocally common to *ens reale* and *ens rationis* in the final question (q. 15). The questions 12 and 13 deal with Scotus's questionable claim that being is not predicated *in quid* of the transcendental properties of being (q. 12) and of the ultimate differences (q. 13). Peter Thomae contradicts the opinions of William of Alnwick and Peter Auriol that being is quidditatively predicated of all differences and maintains instead that it is predicated of none.[100]

Thomae's Quodlibet

Thomae's reflections in *De ente* are complemented by his *Quodlibet*. In the introduction to this work, he divides the questions he will discuss into three parts, questions concerning the *transcendentia* (qq. 1–8), questions concerning God, and questions concerning the creatures—a division which suggests that transcendentals are related to what is

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München 1957, pp. 927–940; p. 934 cites the prologue of *De ente*: "Cum igitur transcendentia sint communissima, oportunum est ad cuiuscumque scientiae acquisitionem de ipsis aliquid pertractare. Inter quoque transcendentia cetera ens ipsum (…) primum et praecipuum locum tenet".

[98] For a survey of the fifteen questions, E. Buytaert, "The Scholastic Writings of Petrus Thomae", p. 934.

[99] Cf. S. D. Dumont, "Transcendental Being: Scotus and Scotists", in: *Topoi* 11 (1992), pp. 135–148.

[100] S. D. Dumont, "The Univocity of the Concept of Being in the Fourteenth Century: II".

common to God and creatures.[101] The first three questions in the first part in particular are instructive for Thomae's reception of Scotus's conception of transcendentality.

1. The first question reads: "What is a pure perfection (*perfectio simpliciter*)?" and offers a systematic account of Scotus's scattered remarks on this subject. Art. 1 explains the complex description of a pure perfection, based on statements by Anselm of Canterbury and Scotus. "A pure perfection is a perfection which for any supposit whatsoever, not determined with respect to its nature, is absolutely better to have than that which is incompatible with it".[102]

In art. 2 Thomae lists, *secundum mentem huius Doctoris*, the properties of a pure perfection considered in itself. His first conclusion confirms the close connection between perfection and transcendentality in Scotism (see ch. 9.2.2), for it claims that "a pure perfection is *transcendens*". Peter's proof is that what is common to God and creatures or what is formally found in God and creatures is as such *transcendens*. A pure perfection, however, is found in God and creatures, as Augustine and Anselm show. Another argument is that what according to its quidditative *ratio* "abstracts" from limited being (*esse limitato*) is as such *transcendens*, but a pure perfection is of this kind.[103]

From the transcendental character of a pure perfection a number of further properties follows: "communicability", which can be inferred from its community—it is not incompatible with a pure perfection that it is common to many distinct things and shared by more than one supposit; "indetermination to finite and infinite being", an indication that an absolute perfection is compatible with infinity; "irreducible simplicity"; and "indifference" to being one or many, necessary or contingent: a pure perfection "abstracts" from these modes, "since it is *transcendens*".[104]

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[101] Petrus Thomae, *Quodlibet*, prol. (ed. Hooper / Buytaert, p. 3): "In *Quolibet* nostro (…) fuerunt quaedam proposita respicientia transcendentia; quaedam alia soli Deo competentia; alia creaturis communia, alia propria".

[102] *Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Hooper / Buytaert, pp. 4–8).

[103] *Ibid.*, a. 2 (p. 8).

[104] *Ibid.* (pp. 9–11).

2. Next Thomae makes some statements about the order of pure perfections. He maintains that there are "degrees" in these perfections according to the "degree of transcendentality" (the term *transcendentia* is used here as an abstract noun). We also encountered the idea of a gradation in transcendentals in the *Tractatus De transcendentibus* of Francis of Meyronnes; it is a typical consequence of Scotus's doctrine because of its separation of transcendentality from commonness: some transcendentals are "more transcendental" than others. Peter Thomae takes these degrees according to the way in which universals are ordered in the so-called Porphyrian Tree from the *genus generalissimum* at the top via the *genus subalternum* and the *genus specialissimum* down to the *species specialissima*. What is, as it were (*quasi*), the most general genus in the order of transcendental perfections is "being" (*ens*); to this degree all that is convertible with being is also reduced. In another text Thomae calls "being", "one" and "good" *transcendens simpliciter*, because they are found in every being, both created and uncreated. What is quasi the subaltern genus is "substance", not in the sense of what underlies (*substando*) the accidents but as what is subsistent (*stando per se*)—in the latter sense substance is found both in God and creatures and can thus be called "transcendental". What is quasi the most special genus is "intelligible", which belongs to both God and creatures. What is, as it were, the most special species or rather *individuum* is the divine essence.[105] Peter Thomae recognizes that this gradation of perfections is based on different kinds of transcending: not all that is transcendental is so *per communitatem communicationis*,

[105] *Ibid.* (p. 12): "Ad cuius evidentiam est advertendum quod gradus in transcendentibus sic possunt accipi: in transcendentibus enim invenitur aliquid quod est quasi generalissimum, aliquid quod est [quasi] genus subalternum, aliquid quod est quasi genus specialissimum, et aliquid quod est quasi species specialissima. Genus generalissimum, ut ipsum ens; et ad istum gradum transcendentiae reducuntur omnia convertibilia cum ente; genus quasi subalternum est ibi substantia, ut ipsa dicitur non a substando accidentibus, sed a per se stando, nam sic accipiendo substantiam, invenitur seu dicitur tam de Deo quam de creaturis; propter quod potest dici transcendens, licet non primo modo; quasi genus specialissimum, ut intelligibile: competit enim tam Deo quam etiam creaturis; species specialissima, immo quasi individuum, ut divina essentia". Cf. Petrus Thomae, *De distinctione predicamentorum* (ed. E. P. Bos, in: M. Kardaun / J. Spruyt (eds.), *The Winged Chariot. Collected Essays on Plato and Platonism in Honour of L. M. de Rijk*, Leiden – Boston – Köln 2000 (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 100), pp. 277–312, here p. 301): "Illud autem est transcendens simpliciter quod reperitur in omni ente tam creato quam increato, sicut 'ens', 'unum', 'bonum'".

it is nevertheless transcendental because of the "eminence of being (*eminentiam entitatis*) and the inclusion of all perfections" (*continentiam omnium perfectionum*).[106]

The tension between commonness and perfection also appears in Thomae's determination of the place of the *ratio* of being in the order of pure perfections—a controversial topic among recent interpreters of Scotus. Among all perfections the concept of being is the more perfect perfection *permissive*, but the less perfect *positive*. The perfection of being consists in its having some kind of infinity, which is called "permissive", since it permits "being" to be every *ratio quiditativa*—the term "permissive" is typical of Peter and is also used in his new logic of the transcendentals. "Being" is, however, "positively" the less perfect perfection, for the more common something is, the more imperfect it positively is, and the *ratio* of being is most common. Furthermore, the concept of being abstracts from any mode or degree of perfection.[107]

3. The second quodlibetal question asks: "Whether this created wisdom is an *individuum* of wisdom that is *transcendens* or wisdom that belongs to the category of quality?"[108] The question is identical with the "doubt" (*dubium*) that Scotus himself raises shortly after his exposition of the transcendentals in the *Ordinatio* (I, d. 8, q. 3), in which he argues that "wisdom" is *transcendens* (see ch. 9.2.2). This claim prompts Thomae to explicate Scotus's key account (*dicta Doctoris*) by presenting his teaching in a systematic order (*dico ista per ordinem*). Peter distinguishes seven points; his presentation does not contain anything new, but illustrates a certain obscurity in Scotus's account with respect to the place of "wisdom":

(i) *Transcendens* is said from "transcending" (*dicitur a 'transcendendo'*). Therefore, all that belongs to being before it is divided into the ten categories can be called *transcendens*, since all of this transcends every category.
(ii) It belongs *per se* to the concept of *transcendens* that it is not contained under a genus.

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[106] Petrus Thomae, *Quodlibet*, q. 1, a. 2 (ed. Hooper / Buytaert, p. 12): "Quaelibet non sic transcendens per communitatem communicationis, est tamen transcendens propter eminentiam entitatis et continentiam omnium perfectionum".
[107] *Ibid.* (pp. 13–14).
[108] *Ibid.*, q. 2 (pp. 25–35).

(iii) It is accidental to the concept of *transcendens* that it is common to few or many things.
(iv) There is a *transcendens* that is common to all things; this is *transcendens simpliciter*, namely, "being" (*ens*).
(v) It is not necessary that a transcendental is said of everything, unless it is convertible with the first transcendental, such as "one", "true" and "good".
(vi) Something is *transcendens*, although it pertains to one single thing, as appears from the disjunctive properties of being. These are transcendental, because they are consequent upon being, before this is divided into the categories, and yet it is evident that one of these properties, for instance, "infinite", belongs to one single being.
(vii) The seventh and final point attempts to determine the place of "wisdom" in this classification. This notion is transcendental, "for it is a property of being, and, as I believe, a disjunctive one, since some beings are wise and some are not wise".[109]

The connecting of the transcendentality of "wisdom" with the class of disjunctive transcendentals is odd. Although it is true that "wisdom" does not belong to every being, one cannot say in this case that both the disjunctive opposites, "wise" and "not-wise", are transcendental, as was claimed in the sixth point. It is striking that Thomae's presentation does not relate "wisdom" to the idea of a pure perfection, although the first quodlibetal question dealt with this notion, nor introduce the pure perfections as a distinct group of transcendentals. The reason might be that Scotus himself did not make such an attempt in his account.

4. The third question in Thomae's *Quodlibet* discusses the transcendentals that are "the properties of being (*passiones entis*)": unity, truth and goodness. He successively treats of their knowability, quiddity and properties.[110]

The first art. concerning the "knowability" (*cognoscibilitas*) of these terms concludes that they cannot be made known by something prior

[109] *Ibid.*, a. 3 (pp. 30–31), in particular: "Septimum est quod sapientia est transcendens: est enim passio entis et, ut credo, disiuncta; ens enim quoddam est sapiens, quoddam non sapiens. Quod sit passio patet, nam eius conceptus est qualitativus entis; quod disiuncta apparet, quia non potest competere omni enti".
[110] *Ibid.*, q. 3 (pp. 35–60).

to them (*a priori*), since they are the first *rationes transcendentes*. An interesting historical detail is that Thomae refers to a thirteenth-century source, the Franciscan *Summa*, attributed to Alexander of Hales, which states that "one", "true" and "good" are the "first determinations of being" (see ch. 4.1). Their *notificatio* can only occur by means of that which is logically posterior, as by a negation or an effect consequent upon them. Thomae illustrates this conclusion by adopting the example the *Summa Halensis* uses, namely the description of "one". This concept means "that which is undivided in itself and divided from others". The first part of this description is the negation of the opposite notion, that of "multitude"; the second part, "divided from others", is the effect consequent upon "one", for unity brings about a distinction from other things.[111]

5. The second art. deals with the "quiddity" of truth and goodness—Thomae leaves unity aside, because he had dealt with this notion in a separate treatise to which he refers.[112] In his analysis of truth, he criticizes Auriol's conception by pointing out its inconsistencies. In his commentary on the *Sentences*, Auriol had claimed that the concept of truth consists in one *ratio*, because "true", like "one", belongs to the transcendentals convertible with "being". Therefore, what applies to "one", must also hold for "true". Now "one" is predicated of everything, to which it is attributed, according to one *ratio*, namely, "indivision"; consequently, "true" is also said according to one *ratio*.[113] Thomae argues that the consequence of this thought must be that "being" also has one determinate *ratio*, which is, however, explicitly denied by Auriol. The consequence follows from the convertibility of "true" and "being", which means that they have the same transcendental scope (*ambitus*) with respect to their supposits. Therefore, if "truth" despite its transcendentality (*transcendentia*) has one determinate *ratio*, the similar consideration must hold for "being".[114]

Another proposition put forward by Auriol states that the general *ratio* of truth consists in "the segregation of each thing from all extrin-

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[111] *Ibid.*, a. 1 (pp. 36–37). Cf. [Alexander of Hales] *Summa theologica*, I, n. 72 (ed. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Vol. I, Quaracchi 1924, p. 113).

[112] Cf. E. P. Bos (ed.), *The Tract 'De Unitate Minori' of Peter Thomae*, Leuven 2002 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales. Bibliotheca, 5).

[113] Peter Auriol, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 19 (ed. Rome 1596, p. 490bB–C).

[114] Petrus Thomae, *Quodlibet*, q. 3, a. 2 (ed. Hooper / Buytaert, pp. 40–41).

sic to it" (*segregatio cuiuslibet ab omni sibi extraneo*); this "segregation" effects that the pure essence of a thing is manifest.[115] Thomae objects that no negation can be the formal *ratio* of "truth", since truth is, as Auriol himself teaches, a pure perfection and a pure perfection is not formally a negation. Thomae observes that Auriol, in the continuation of his argument, recognizes that truth is not segregation but "connotes" (*connotat*) it. However, by introducing the connotation model Auriol gets caught in a contradiction, because the formal *ratio* of something that connotes is not that which is connoted. If segregation is that which is connoted, it cannot therefore be the formal *ratio* of truth.[116]

Thomae establishes that "truth" is formally nothing but truth and is not truth by something other than itself, since it is a concept "irreducibly simple" (*simpliciter simplex*). From this conclusion he draws a number of corollaries: truth is formally not "the indivision of being and that which is" (*indivisio esse et eius quod est*)—a remarkable reference to the beginning of the doctrine of the transcendentals in Philip the Chancellor, who interpreted the convertible transcendentals according to the model of *indivisio*. Nor is truth formally the "conformity" or "adequation" of thing and intellect, or the *manifestativitas* or *declarativitas*. It does not make sense to raise the question "What is truth?", since truth is truth itself.[117]

In a similar way Thomae proceeds with respect to "goodness". It is formally goodness by nothing but itself. Thus, the proper *ratio* of goodness is neither "the end" (*finis*) nor any of the other descriptions suggested in the tradition, such as "perfect", "communicative" (*communicativum*), "suitable" (*conveniens*), "unity", "desirable" (*appetibilis*) or the "indivision of act and potency".[118] One could wonder whether Thomae does justice to the tradition. His predecessors knew very well that transcendentals cannot receive an essential definition, because they cannot be made known by something prior to them. They therefore understood the mentioned descriptions of "truth" and "goodness" as definitions a posteriori.

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[115] Peter Auriol, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 19 (ed. Rome 1596, p. 492bB).
[116] Petrus Thomae, *Quodlibet*, q. 3, a. 2 (ed. Hooper / Buytaert, p. 41).
[117] *Ibid.* (pp. 43–44).
[118] *Ibid.* (pp. 44–45).

6. In art. 3 of the third question, Thomae examines "whether it can be sustained that truth and goodness are the formal or moving *rationes* of the object of the intellect and the will".[119] He first introduces two series of distinctions concerning the object of a potency: the distinction between *obiectum per se primo, per se non primo* and *per accidens*, and the distinction between the *obiectum quod* and the *obiectum quo*. The divisions are traditional and serve, as it will become clear, a polemical aim.

Thomae next formulates some conclusions, the most important of which being that "truth", that is, the feature of intelligibility, is the formal *ratio* of the object of the intellect. In this context he critically discusses Auriol's conception of the formal object of the intellect (see 10.1.2). Thomae cites verbally Auriol's fourfold distinction of the object of the intellect in *obiectum motivum, obiectum denominativum, obiectum praedicativum* and *obiectum terminativum* as well as his supporting arguments.[120]

The criticisms are especially focused on the presupposition of Auriol's division, the primacy of the singular thing. When he claims that the particular entity of a thing is the moving object of the intellect, he fails to distinguish between the object *per se primo* and *per se non primo*, although both reason and authority (Aristotle) dictate such a distinction. The first object *per se* of a potency is said to be its "adequate" object in the sense that nothing can be attained by that potency, if it does not participate in the formal *ratio* of the object. Now the proper entity of a thing moves the intellect *per se*, not, however, *per se primo*, just as a particular color is the object of sight, just because it participates in the *ratio* of color, which is the first object *per se*. Auriol's argument that no common *ratio*, such as "being", moves the intellect because it is evident that the intellect does not have to preconceive the concept of "being" in order to understand the concept of "man", rests on a false assumption. It assumes that the *ratio obiectiva* must be preconceived, but this not true: the formal *ratio* is not the *obiectum quod* of a potency but the aspect under which a potency attains its object, the *obiectum quo*.[121]

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[119] *Ibid.*, a. 3 (pp. 45–60).
[120] *Ibid.* (pp. 48–50).
[121] *Ibid.* (pp. 50–51).

Thomae also criticizes Scotus's rejection of the view that the transcendental true (*verum*) is the adequate object of the intellect (see ch. 9.4.3). The *Doctor subtilis* distinguished insufficiently between the *obiectum quod* of a potency and the *obiectum quo*. "Being" is the first *obiectum quod* of the intellect, but "truth" is the formal *ratio* by which this object is known.[122]

Being and identity: A new transcendental logic

1. A vivid discussion in *De ente* concerns the relation between being and the convertible transcendentals. Thomae quotes *verbatim* the eight arguments by which Auriol, in his *Scriptum*, contends against Scotus that the properties of being include being quidditatively. His seventh argument, for instance, states that it is impossible that a property is found without the proper *ratio* of its subject, for otherwise it is not a property that corresponds (*adequata*) with that *ratio*. Now distinction (*distinctio*) is one of the properties of being. Consequently, it is impossible that something founds a distinction without the *ratio* of being. Auriol must deliberately have chosen this example of a property of being, for it enables him in the continuation of this argument to attack the Scotist "formal" distinction of transcendental notions. "Those formalities are, according to this position, the foundations of distinction, since they are formally distinct from one another. Therefore the *ratio* of being is in them; they thus include being, not as something different from them, and consequently not in a denominative manner".[123]

In his reply to Auriol, Thomae strongly emphasizes that the convertible transcendentals, although formally distinct, are intimately related to one another. To this end he borrows the term *circumincessio* ("interpenetration") from Trinitarian theology, where it is used to express the presence of the three divine Persons of the Trinity in one another, in accordance with Christ's saying in John 14,11: "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me". Bonaventure introduced the phrase in his work *Itinerarium*, when describing the relations between the Persons: "They must have supreme intimacy (*cointimitas*), by which one Person is necessarily in the other by reason of their supreme

[122] *Ibid.* (pp. 57–59).
[123] Petrus Thomae, *De ente*, q. 13 (ed. Dumont, p. 240). Cf. Petrus Aureoli, *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, n. 78 (ed. Buytaert, p. 497).

interpenetration (*circumincessio*)".[124] Thomae applies this term to the transcendentals "one", "true" and "good". This application is not only in keeping with a distinctive feature of the Franciscan doctrine of these notions, the trinitarian motive (see ch. IV), but also in line with Auriol's account of the convertible transcendentals as "vestiges of the Trinity" (see 10.1.4).

Thomae argues that some properties of being penetrate (*circumincedunt*) and denominate one another because of their vast community. Therefore, unity is called "good" and "true", truth "good" and "one", and goodness "one" and "true". Similarly being (*ens*) penetrates these properties, for each of them is "being", just as the properties penetrate being with the result that being is "one", "true" and "good". This interpenetration (*circumincessio*), however, is not quidditative, but denominative because of the mutual intimacy.[125] To sum up, it may be said that in the matter of these transcendentals three things must be retained: (i) the mutual intimacy of their formal concepts, from which the impossibility of circumscribing the one by the other follows; (ii) their proper feature (*proprietas*), from which it follows that they can be distinguished from one another; and (iii) their mutual denomination, from which a certain circularity follows. Thomae concludes: "Because of their ignorance of these three things most people were deceived, wanting to judge uniformly on special and transcendental *rationes*".[126] Auriol apparently belongs to this group.

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[124] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, c. 6, n. 4 (ed. Collegium S. Bonaventurae, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. V, Quaracchi 1891, p. 310). For the meaning of the term *circumincessio* in Latin theology, cf. A. Deneffe, "Perichoresis, circumincessio, circuminsessio", in: *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 47 (1923), pp. 497–552.

[125] Petrus Thomae, *De ente*, q. 13 (ed. Dumont, p. 245): "Dicendum igitur primo quod aliquae propriae passiones entis per suam nimiam communitatem circumincedunt se ipsas et denominant. Unde dicitur unitas bona et vera, et veritas bona et una, et bonitas una et vera. Similiter ens circumincedit omnes istas passiones, nam quaelibet ipsarum est ens et ipsae circumincedunt ens, nam ens est unum verum et bonum. Praedicta autem circumincessio non est quiditativa, sed cuiusdam mutuae intimitatis et denominationis".

[126] *Ibid.* (ed. Dumont, p. 246): "Sunt autem in materia illorum transcendentium tria semper necessario retinenda: scilicet mutua intimitas suarum rationum formalium, proprietas, et ipsorum mutua denominabilitas. Ex primo sequitur circumscriptionis unius impossibilitas ab alio; ex secundo ipsorum ab invicem distinguibilitas; ex tertio quaedam denominativa circularitas, propter quorum ignorantiam decipiuntur plerique volentes de rationibus specialibus et de rationibus transcendentibus uniformiter iudicare".

2. In his *Quodlibet*, just as in *De ente*, Peter Thomae underlines that a "singular" feature of transcendental concepts, such as "truth" and "goodness", is that they denominate and include one another. He adds a new element: truth and goodness are predicated of one another by *identity*; truth includes goodness, and conversely, goodness includes truth, not by a formal inclusion, but by an "identical" inclusion.[127] But how is this possible, since the transcendentals "truth" and "goodness" are formally distinct from one another?

Thomae introduces a new kind of predication with respect to the transcendentals, namely the "identical predication", when in *De ente* he discusses one of Alnwick's arguments *contra* Scotus's view that "being" cannot be predicated *in quid* of the ultimate differences. Alnwick argues that every predication *in abstracto* is essential and quidditative, since this predication occurs in ultimate abstraction from accidental conditions. But the proposition "rationality is entity" is true, because rationality is not nothingness (*nihileitas*). Therefore, "entity" is quidditatively predicated of "rationality", that is, of an ultimate difference.[128]

In his reply, Thomae recognizes the truth of the proposition "rationality is entity", but the recognition of its truth presupposes, he adds, a distinction between "formal" predication and "identical" predication. In any true and essential predication, f. i. "man is an animal", a formal identity of subject and predicate is expressed, because the predicate intrinsically belongs to the *ratio* of the subject. The distinction between "formal" and "identical" predication suggests, however, that there is a kind of predication, in which predicate and subject are essentially the same—Thomae speaks of an "identical identity" that is distinct from "formal identity".[129]

The distinction in predication has been taken from Scotus, who related the distinction to the difference between God and creature.

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[127] Petrus Thomae, *Quodlibet*, q. 3, a. 3 (ed. Hooper / Buytaert, p. 56): "(…) a parte istarum rationum, puta veritatis et bonitatis: huiusmodi enim rationes propter ipsarum summam transcendentiam se mutuo denominant et includunt. Unde veritas includit bonitatem, et e converso—dico inclusione identica, non formali. (…) Et hoc est singulare in istis transcendentibus rationibus, quod videlicet de se invicem identice praedicantur et se denominant".

[128] Petrus Thomae, *De ente*, q. 13 (ed. Dumont, p. 218, l. 14–17).

[129] *Ibid.* (ed. Dumont, pp. 249–250, ll. 820–863) and the editor's commentary, pp. 210–215. Cf. *Quodlibet*, q. 6 (ed. Hooper / Buytaert, pp. 89–118): "Utrum identitas identica possit poni in aliquo sine infinitate intensive utriusque vel alterius extremorum".

Identical predication is the logic of the divine, since an essential condition of predication by identity is that each or one of the terms is infinite. Scotus maintains that in the divine essence, which is really one, different attributes can be distinguished through a distinction that is not the product of the human intellect but exists *ex natura rei*. All divine perfections are formally distinct, because they possess a quiddity of their own. Yet this formal distinction does not impugn divine unity, for the attributes exist in God in an infinite manner. For this reason identical predication is possible in the divine: any two formal perfections in God, such as wisdom and goodness, can be predicated of one another by a real identity ("wisdom is goodness"), even though they are formally distinct.[130]

Thomae goes, as he himself observes, beyond Scotus, who restricted the scope of identical predication to the divine and denied that in creatures there is predication by identity and another predication other than the formal predication. Thomae, however, extends identical predication to the transcendental concepts. Just as the divine perfections are formally distinct and yet can be predicated of one another by identity, likewise identical predication is possible with respect to "being" and the properties convertible with it, although they are formally distinct. The reason is that "being" also has a kind of infinity. It is not "intensively" infinite, which is proper to God alone, but it has because of the illimitation of a transcendental an infinity, which Thomae calls *permissive*—it is the same phrase he uses to explain that the concept of "being" is an absolute perfection. This infinity "permits" being to be predicated *in abstracto* by identity even of those things with which it is not formally identical, namely, of ultimate differences and the other transcendentals.[131]

Peter Thomae rethinks the Scotist view of the relation between being and the convertible transcendentals, between transcendentality

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[130] Cf. S. Knuuttila, "*Praedicatio identica* in Scotus's Theological Metaphysics", in: H. Möhle / L. Honnefelder / A. Speer / Th. Kobusch / S. Bullido del Barrio (eds.), *Johannes Duns Scotus, 1308–2008. Die philosophischen Perspektiven seines Werkes. Investigations into his Philosophy*, Münster-St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 2010 (Archa Verbi. Subsidia, 5), pp. 265–276.

[131] Cf. Petrus Thomae, *De distinctione predicamentorum* (ed. Bos, p. 301): "Ad predicationem ydempticam duo necessario requiruntur: Primum est quod predicatum et subiectum sint idem essentialiter (…). Secundum est quod utrumque extremorum sit infinitum formaliter, sicut in divinis, vel permissive sicut in transcendentibus simpliciter. (…) Illud autem est transcendens simpliciter quod reperitur in omni ente tam creato quam increato, sicut 'ens', 'unum', 'bonum'".

and predicability. His innovation consists in extending two theological teachings to the transcendental domain, namely the trinitarian concept of "interpenetration" (*circumincessio*) and the concept of "identical predication". He transforms "what was for Scotus a divine logic proper to God into a transcendental logic common to God and creatures".[132] This innovation has its antecedents in Francis of Meyronnes,[133] but Thomae gave this transcendental logic its most systematic development.

10.4 Nicholas Bonet: The first systematic account of a transcendental metaphysics

Nicholas Bonet, Franciscan and student of Duns Scotus, was master in Paris around 1320, and died as bishop of Malta in 1343. Modern surveys of medieval philosophy do not pay attention to his work, but this lack of interest was not always there. A sign of the early modern interest in his thought is the fact that already in the beginning of the sixteenth century four of his writings were printed: *Metaphysica, Physica, Praedicamenta* and *Theologia naturalis*.[134] In dictionaries and compendia, the first three works are often categorized as "Aristotle commentaries", but this designation is incorrect and does not do justice to their original character. Bonet's *Metaphysics* is not a commentary that follows the order of exposition in Aristotle's writing, but an independent treatise in nine books. It really is the first systematic account of metaphysics in the Middle Ages, for what we usually call "Aquinas's metaphysics" or "Scotus's metaphysics" is in fact a reconstruction of the modern interpreter.[135]

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[132] S. D. Dumont, "The Univocity of the Concept of Being in the Fourteeth Century: II", p. 213.

[133] Francis of Meyronnes, *Conflatus*, prol. q. 6 (ed. Venice 1520, fol. 5vbO); d. 8, q. 5 (fol. 49raB–C). Cf. H. Möhle, *Formalitas und modus intrinsecus*, pp. 153–154.

[134] Nicholas Bonet, *Metaphysica, Naturalis philosophia, Praedicamenta, Theologia naturalis* (ed. L. Venier, Venice 1505).

[135] The study of Bonet has only just started: W. Goris, "After Scotus. Dispersions of Metaphysics, of the Scope of Intelligibility, and of the Transcendental in the Early 14th Century", pp. 139–157. I. Mandrella, "Metaphysik als Supertranszendentalwissenschaft? Zum scotistischen Metaphysikentwurf des Nicolaus Bonetus", in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 75 (2008), pp. 161–193 [French transl. in: P. Porro / J. Schmutz (eds.), *La posterità di Giovanni Duns Scoto*, Turnhout 2008 (Quaestio, 8), pp. 159–175]. M. Forlivesi, "'Quae in hac quaestione tradit Doctor videntur humanun ingenium superare'. Scotus, Andrés, Bonet, Zerbi and Trombetta

Typical is the beginning of Bonet's treatise, in which he wants to show that "metaphysics is the first in the *ordo doctrinae*". Starting from the famous opening statement of Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* he infers a methodic principle from it. Because "all men by nature desire to know", they have to begin with what is naturally first knowable (*scibile*). Bonet clarifies what this first is through an analysis inspired by the beginning of the *Posterior Analytics*, in which Aristotle claims that "all intellectual learning proceeds from pre-existent knowledge". Bonet argues that the distinct knowledge of a conclusion is dependent on the knowledge of the principles, the premises. The knowledge of the principles is dependent on the knowledge of the terms. Knowledge of the terms that can be resolved (into prior terms) is dependent on the knowledge of irreducible terms. It is therefore clear that everyone who by nature desires to know has to begin with the term that is irreducibly simple and, consequently, most common. The *communissima* are altogether simple, and are the causes and principles of what is later. The knowledge of the first term that is irreducibly simple is called "metaphysics"—a name that Bonet explains by adopting Duns Scotus's (quasi-) etymological interpretation: "it is from *metha*, which means '*trans*', and *ycos*, which means '*scientia*', because it deals with the first quiddity that transcends the ten highest genera".[136] Again and again Bonet designates this science as an *ars* that is *universalis* and *transcendens*.[137]

What is notable in Bonet's explanation of the name "metaphysics" is that he does not simply say, like Scotus, that this science deals with the *transcendentia*, but with the "first *quiddity*" that transcends the genera. The emphasis on the quidditative aspect becomes somewhat more understandable, when he, in the continuation of the first chapter, maintains that there cannot be scientific knowledge of an irreduc-

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Confronting the Nature of Metaphysics", in: P. Porro / J. Schmutz (eds.), *La posterità di Giovanni Duns Scoto*, pp. 219–277 (on Bonet, pp. 248–256).

[136] Nicholas Bonet, *Metaphysica*, I, c. 1 (ed. Venice 1505, fol. 2ra): "Palam igitur quod a prioribus secundum naturam omni homini desideranti scire naturaliter est incipiendum; ergo a termino omnino irresolubili et per consequens a termino omnino communissimo. Communissima autem sunt omnino simplicia et posteriorum cause et principia. Notitia autem primi termini irresolubilis simpliciter metaphysica dicitur a metha quod est 'trans' et ycos 'scientia' quia est de omnino prima quidditate transcendenti x prima genera".

[137] Cf. *ibid.*, c. 3 (fol. 5vb): "Et quia ista ars dicitur universalis et transcendens, ad ipsam pertinet tractare de communissimis". *Ibid.*, c. 4 (fol. 6vb) and c. 6 (fol. 9ra).

ible term that is equivocal or analogous. Both an equivocal and an analogous term imply a plurality of significates; the only difference between them is that in the case of analogy all significates are related to one (instance), in which the *ratio* formally is. A term with a plurality of significates, however, is not a subject of science, whose unity is required for scientific knowledge. There can only be a scientific discipline of a term that is univocal.[138] Accordingly, the second chapter of book I clarifies the notion of univocity.

Bonet elaborates his "transcendental" metaphysics according to the structure of a scientific discipline: a *scientia* demonstrates the properties (*passiones*) that belong *per se* to the "subject" of that science. Book I extensively deals with the notion of "subject". Bonet distinguishes the different senses of "subject" and analyzes the conditions of the "subject of scientific consideration", on the basis of which he determines the "subject" of metaphysics as being-as-being—no other account discusses the basic question of medieval metaphysics so thoroughly. In book II, devoted to the *habitus metaphysicalis*, he raises the question of whether the "object" of the intellect and the "subject" of metaphysics are identical. In book IV Bonet begins his examination of the properties (*passiones*) that belong *per se* to the "subject" of metaphysics. He holds that preferential treatment has to be given to what he calls "the first complex principle", namely "with respect to the same there is either affirmation or negation". A preliminary account of this principle is necessary, because every conclusion concerning the properties of the subject is dependent on it.[139] In book V Bonet treats of the simple properties that are convertible with being-as-being, in book VI with the disjunctive properties, such as "contingent or necessary", "finite or infinite".

Bonet's treatise presents a Scotist model of metaphysics, but his "transcendental science" possesses some special features. The innovative character of his conception will become clear from three topics: (10.4.1) the subject of metaphysics and the univocity of being; (10.4.2) the first object of the intellect and the subject of metaphysics; and (10.4.3) the dissociation of the transcendental properties from the subject of metaphysics.

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[138] *Ibid.*, c. 1 (fol. 2ra–b).
[139] *Ibid.*, IV, c. 1 (fol. 24ra).

10.4.1 *The subject of metaphysics and the univocity of being*

1. In the last chapter of the first book of his *Metaphysics*, Bonet wants to establish (*stabilire*) being-as-being (*ens inquantum ens*) as the subject of metaphysics. To this end he examines whether the seven negative and the seven positive properties of a "subject of science", which he had listed in chapter 3, apply to "being-as-being". By far the biggest part of this inquiry is concerned with the second negative property, namely, that the subject of a science is not an *ens aequivocum* but must be univocal.[140]

Bonet starts his account with what he calls a "brief distinction" regarding the term "being" (*ens*). The distinction may be brief, but turns out to be fundamental for his entire conception of metaphysics, for he repeats it at crucial places in his work. In one sense, "being" signifies "everything positive that is outside of nothing (*omne positivum quod est extra nihil*)", whether it is real being or being of reason, whether it is categorial or outside the categories. In another sense, "being" signifies one determinate *ratio* or quiddity that is "numerable against" (*connumerabilis contra*) other intelligible contents or quiddities.[141] The opposition is thus between "being" understood as *all* that is positive, distinct from nothing, and "being" understood as *one* determinate quiddity, distinct from other quiddities.

Dealing with the first member of the division, Bonet immediately concludes that "being" in its all-encompassing sense is not univocal, since it does not have one determinate *ratio*. Consequently, it cannot be the subject of this metaphysics nor of any other science. "Being" in the first sense cannot be contracted by something else added to it, but coincides (*coincidit*) with all that is positive in reality as well as in concept, and includes every *ratio*.[142] From this it follows that it has no properties and no differences. Bonet suggests that Porphyry's

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[140] *Ibid.*, I, c. 6 (fol. 7ra).

[141] *Ibid.*, c. 6 (fol. 7ra): "Et primo de ente est ponenda una brevis distinctio (…). Ens autem est nomen quod potest esse impositum ad significandum omne positivum quod est extra nihil, sive sit ens reale, sive rationis, sive directe sit in praedicamento, sive per reductionem, sive sit extra praedicamentum. Alio modo loqui possumus de significato huius nominis 'ens', prout est impositum ad significandum non omne positivum quod est extra nihil, sed ad significandum unam determinatam rationem seu quiditatem connumerabilem contra alias rationes et quiditates".

[142] *Ibid.* (fol. 7ra-b): "Prima igitur conclusio sit ista, quod ens sic acceptum non est univocum et per consequens non potest esse subiectum huius metaphysicae, nec alicuius scientiae. (…) Ex his omnibus concluditur quod ens in ista significatione non

claim of the "equivocity of being" is concerned with this acceptance of "being".[143]

Next Bonet examines whether "being" in its second meaning is a univocal quiddity. He divides this discussion into five inquiries:

- whether being is univocal to the ten categories;
- whether being is univocal to real being and being of reason;
- whether being is univocal to the first intelligence and all beings;
- whether being is predicated quidditatively of its properties;
- whether being is predicated quidditatively of its proper differences.

Bonet argues that "being" in the second sense is univocally predicated of the categories, of real being and being of reason, and of the divine and created being, so that being in this sense meets the condition of the subject of a science that it is not equivocal.[144] Four of the five inquiries are usual within the Scotist doctrine of univocity; what is new in Bonet is the second investigation, the extension of metaphysical univocity to real being and being of reason—an idea explicitly rejected by Scotus himself. We therefore concentrate on the inquiry into this kind of univocity.

2. Bonet's thesis is that being-as-being or the quiddity of being is "a quiddity univocal to real being and being of reason". He immediately adds that by "being of reason" he does not mean "being in the soul" (*ens in anima*) but the (objective) being that what is known has in the knower or "the sequel of this being", that is, second intentions, like "genus" and "species".[145] This clarification is necessary, because otherwise it would seem that Bonet's claim is inconsistent with his enumeration of the negative properties of a scientific subject, of which the fourth is that the subject is not an *ens in anima*. There, in c. 3, he had

potest univocum, cum non sit contrahibile per aliquid additum, imo coincidit cum omni positivo in re et ratione".

[143] *Ibid.* (fol. 7va).

[144] *Ibid.* (fol. 11rb): "Ad propositum igitur redeamus unde venit sermo. Prius concludamus quod quiditas entis, cum sit dictum quod est univoca decem predicamentis, enti etiam reali et enti rationis, prime intelligentie et omnibus aliis (…), patet ex his manifeste quod non repugnat sibi ratio subiecti scibilis propter secundam proprietatem negativam que erat quod subiectum non debebat esse equivocum sed univocum".

[145] *Ibid.* (fol. 8vb): "Ens autem inquantum ens est quiditas univoca enti reali et enti rationis, et per ens rationis non intelligo ens in anima sed esse quod habet cognitum in cognoscente vel aliquid derelictum et sequela talis esse".

explained that "being in the soul" means being as a *copula*, by which the intellect connects a predicate term with a subject term.[146]

Bonet's argument for the univocity of the quiddity of being to real being and being of reason relies on the relation between the concept of being and the first principle of thought, "it is impossible for the same to be and not to be at the same time". He defines this relation as one between a subject and its proper property: "to be or not to be" is a *per se* disjunctive *passio* of being-as-being. The first principle is, in the form of a disjunction, verified in real being as well as in being of reason. Consequently, the subject of this principle, namely being-as-being, is uniformly found in *ens reale* and *ens rationis*, because a proper *passio* is not found without its subject.[147]

But Bonet himself expresses reservations with respect to the validity of this argument. It is doubtful, he states, whether the adequate subject of the first principle is the univocal quiddity of being-as-being. He announces that he will return to this issue in the fourth book of his treatise. There (c. 1), he argues that the first and adequate subject of the first principle is not the subject of metaphysics, being-as-being (see 10.4.3). In *Metaphysics* I, c. 6, Bonet recognizes that the univocity of real being and being of reason must be proven in another manner and asserts that this can be done through the arguments by which he had shown that the concept of being is univocal to the categories, such as the argument based on a certain and doubtful concept.[148]

Bonet raises some interesting "doubts" (*dubia*) with regard to this new and more extensive sense of univocity. The first one points to the qualitative difference between real being and being of reason, which was Scotus's decisive objection to their univocity. *Ens rationis* is "diminished being" (*ens diminutum*) and "being in a certain respect" (*secundum quid*); *ens reale*, on the other hand, is "true being" and "being absolutely" (*simpliciter*). Bonet recognizes this diversity: the difference that contracts being to a being of reason is imperfect in comparison to the difference that contracts being to real being. But

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[146] *Ibid.*, c. 3 (fol. 4v).

[147] *Ibid.*, c. 6 (fol. 8vb): "Hoc probatur quia primum principium ita verificatur sub disjunctione de ente rationis sicut de ente reali. Ergo subjectum primi principii, quod est ens inquantum ens, uniformiter reperitur in ente reali et rationis, quia non reperitur propria passio sine suo subiecto. Esse autem vel non esse est per se passio disiunctiva entis inquantum ens".

[148] *Ibid.*

insofar as the quiddity of being "prescinds" (*prescindit*) from these differences, it is equally perfect in being of reason as it is in real being. This type of univocity is not essentially dissimilar from the other forms of univocity that likewise apply to realities that are not ontologically equivalent, such as substance and accident. Insofar as the quiddity of being prescinds from the differences by which being is contracted to accident and to substance, it is equally perfect in both.[149]

Another "doubt" takes the long Aristotelian tradition into account that excludes being of reason from the consideration of metaphysics. It argues that this exclusion would not occur, if "being" were univocal to real being and being of reason. But Bonet replies that the exclusion of *ens rationis* is not due to a deficient univocity. Nor is the reason Aristotle's claim that the metaphysician's scope is restricted to real being. Bonet refers to a transcendental consideration: the metaphysician is an *artifex transcendens* who investigates the essential properties of being as being. It does not belong to his task to demonstrate the properties proper to subordinate beings. Therefore, the metaphysician rightly excludes *ens rationis* from his consideration with respect to the properties proper to it, not, however, with respect to the properties of being-as-being, which inhere in being of reason *per se*, although not *primo*.[150] The subject of metaphysics includes being of reason.

10.4.2 *The first object of the intellect and the subject of metaphysics*

The dissociation

In the second book of his *Metaphysics*, Bonet raises the question of whether the first object of the intellect is identical with the subject of metaphysics, being-as-being. Because he adopts Scotus's threefold distinction of a first object—there is a first object in the order of

[149] *Ibid.* (fol. 9ra).

[150] *Ibid.*: "Ad tertium dubium, cum dicitur quod ens rationis abiicitur a consideratione metaphysici, respondetur quod hoc non est propter defectum univocationis entis ad ens reale et ens rationis, sed quia metaphysicus est artifex universalis et transcendens atque primus philosophus, per se passiones entis inquantum ens inquirens. Abiicit a sua consideratione, et bene omnia per se contenta sub ente quantum ad eorum passiones proprias, quia ad ipsum non pertinet inquantum metaphysicus (…). Ergo abiicit a sua consideratione et bene ens rationis quantum ad suas passiones proprias, non autem quantum ad passiones entis inquantum ens, que insunt enti rationis per se, licet non primo".

adequation, in the order of perfection and in the order of origin—, the treatment of the question is immediately divided into three subquestions.

Concerning the first object in "the order of adequation", Bonet makes five negative statements that are arranged according to an increasing degree of generality of being. The first adequate object of the intellect is (i) not the quiddity of a material thing; (ii) not the actually existing thing; (iii) not real being, for beings of reason are intelligible as well; (iv) not finite being, whether real being or being of reason; and finally (v) not the subject of metaphysics, being-as-being. The reason that being-as-being is not the first adequate object of the intellect is that it prescinds from all other quiddities and that not only the quiddity of being moves the intellect to its knowledge, but also other quiddities posterior to "being", like "substance" and "body".[151]

In reply to the objection that if being-as-being is not the first adequate object of the intellect there will be no adequate object at all, Bonet again appeals to the distinction between the two meanings of "being" that he had introduced in his account of the univocal subject of metaphysics in book I. If "being" is taken in its first meaning, signifying *omne positivum* that is outside of nothing, then it is the adequate object of the intellect negatively in the sense that nothing moves the intellect and terminates its act, if it is not formally "being". But being in this sense is *not*, as it was shown, the subject of metaphysics.[152]

Concerning the first object in "the order of perfection", it is clear that this is not the subject of metaphysics. Being-as-being is rather the most imperfect object (*obiectum imperfectissimum*), because being is the absolutely first predicate and prior predicates are more imperfect than posterior predicates that include and contract them. The first object according to the primacy of perfection is the first intelligence (*intelligentia prima*).[153]

Concerning the first object in "the order of origin", one has to distinguish between the order of confused knowledge and the order of distinct knowledge. With regard to the confused knowledge, there is no essential order of priority; with regard to the distinct knowledge, Scotus had argued that the first object in this order is being-as-

[151] *Ibid.*, II, c. 7 (fol. 17rb–va).
[152] *Ibid.* (fol. 17va).
[153] *Ibid.*

being. But according to Bonet his argument does not have universal validity. It demonstrates that being is the first known with regard to things, in which it is quidditatively included, but not with respect to all things. As Scotus recognizes, being is not quidditatively included in the properties of being and the ultimate differences. Because they have, like "being", concepts altogether simple and irreducible, they can be distinctly conceived without a distinct knowledge of "being". Bonet therefore concludes that there is a plurality of equally first objects in the order of the origin of distinct knowledge.[154]

"Our metaphysics": not onto-theology but "pure" ontology

Since the results of his analysis with respect to the "objective" primacy of being-as-being were mainly negative, it is quite natural that Bonet wonders how "our metaphysics" (*metaphysica nostra*) is related to the other sciences. How does the negative outcome combine with the beginning of his treatise, in which he shows that metaphysics is the first in the order of science (*ordo doctrinae*)? Bonet argues that "our" metaphysics is necessarily prior in the order of origin to any other science, both in the order of discovery and in the order of teaching. Although "being" is not absolutely (*simpliciter*) the first distinctly known object in the order of origin, it is the first in a certain respect, namely with regard to every thing scientifically knowable, since this includes being quidditatively.[155]

The emphasis in this argument is on the phrase "*our* metaphysics", for Bonet opposes his understanding of this science to a long tradition of metaphysical thought. If you object, he says, that Aristotle and many other philosophers determined and handed down to us metaphysics as the last science in the order of knowing, I reply that in Aristotle's metaphysics not only purely metaphysical issues (*pure metaphysicalia*) are handed down, but also theological matters (*theologica*), such as the separate substances and intelligences. Because these matters are lofty and most difficult, this science is traditionally the last one in the order

[154] *Ibid.* (fol. 18ra–b).

[155] *Ibid.* (fol. 18rb): "Concludi igitur potest necessario quod nostra metaphysica est primitate originis omni alia scientia, et in ordine inveniendi et in ordine docendi. (…) nulla scientia potest inveniri nisi metaphysica prius inventa, cum sit de primo obiecto cognito distincte".

of discovery and in the order of teaching.[156] Bonet, however, distances himself from this onto-theological conception of First Philosophy.

If there were nothing but purely metaphysical issues in this science, he argues, "like in our metaphysics, in which only purely metaphysical predicates, which are convertible with being-as-being, are proven", this science would be the first both in the order of discovery and in the order of teaching.[157] In contrast to Scotus, Bonet's transcendental science is a pure ontology; he relegates theological matters to another work he composed, the *Theologia naturalis*, which deals with another science, of which the first intelligence, i.e. the first mover, is the "subject".[158] Accordingly, this "pure" metaphysics is prior to all other sciences and the first to be studied, for it is the easiest to learn, since its subject, being-as-being, is impressed in the intellect by a first impression.[159]

But the priority has a price. The transcendental science is so basic that Bonet "does not feel embarrassed to confess" that "his" metaphysics is the most imperfect science and possesses the lowest place among the sciences. If it is objected that for Aristotle metaphysics was the "goddess of the sciences", Bonet replies that this title of honor is related to the part of Aristotle's metaphysics that deals with theological issues. But the part in which purely metaphysical topics are treated is not nobler than "our" metaphysics and is identical with it.[160]

The fact that Bonet's transcendental science is the most imperfect science seems to be the effect of the separation of metaphysics

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[156] *Ibid.*: "Prima etiam est nostra metaphysica omni alia scientia primitate originis in ordine docendi. (…) Et si dicas: Aristoteles et alii philosophi multi ordinaverunt et nobis tradiderunt metaphysicam et eam ultimo docuerunt, respondeo tibi quod in metaphysica Aristotelis non sunt pure metaphysicalia tradita, sed sunt ibi multa theologica de substantiis separatis et de intelligentiis quae sunt multum alta et difficillima; et ideo ultima est ratione illorum et in ordine inveniendi et in ordine docendi".

[157] *Ibid.*: "Sed si non essent ibi nisi pure metaphysicalia, sicut in nostra metaphysica in qua non probabuntur nisi pure metaphysicalia praedicata cum ente in quantum ens convertibilia, ipsa esset prima in ordine inveniendi et in ordine docendi".

[158] The relation between metaphysics and natural theology in Bonet requires closer scrutiny. How is his ontological conception related to the treatment of the disjunctive properties of being, which were the way towards the natural knowledge of the divine in Scotus?

[159] Nicholas Bonet, *Metaphysica*, II, c. 7 (ed. Venice 1505, fol. 18rb–va): "Et ideo primo ante omnes alias scientias istam metaphysicam trado tibi, ut eam primo audias et primo studeas, quia inter alias ista est facillima ad adiscendum, cum subiectum eius quod est ens in quantum ens prima impressione imprimatur in intellectu".

[160] *Ibid.* (fol. 18va).

from philosophical theology. It is remarkable that one of the central elements in Scotus's *scientia transcendens*, his doctrine of the "pure perfections" common to God and creatures, does not receive a place in Bonet's metaphysics, but is referred by him to natural theology (*Theologia naturalis* III, c. 1).

10.4.3 *The dissociation of the transcendental properties from the subject of metaphysics*

The first complex principle

In book IV of his *Metaphysics*, Bonet discusses the "first complex principle": "With respect to the same there is either affirmation or negation". He interprets the principle of contradiction as a disjunctive property of being, insofar as it either affirms or denies being. The first principle of demonstration was a topic that thinkers before Bonet had already related to the doctrine of the transcendentals. One of the innovative aspects of Aquinas's doctrine had been the "transcendental" foundation he gave to the first principle, which Aristotle had called the *anhypotheton* of thought. The first principle is founded on what is first in non-complex knowledge, the concept of "being". One could wonder, however, whether in Aquinas's account the first principle is in fact not founded on two primary concepts, "being" and "non-being". It is this aspect that Bonet wants to express in his disjunctive interpretation of the first principle, but the principle proves to be a disjunctive property of a special nature. This property must be considered, he maintains, before the other transcendental attributes, simple or disjunctive, because the demonstration that these attributes are *per se* properties of being presupposes this principle.[161]

Bonet examines in book IV whether there is a first adequate subject of the first complex principle. He determines the conditions of such a subject through the relations of implication between a first subject

[161] *Ibid.*, IV, c. 1 (fol. 24ra): "Entis in quantum ens per se passiones querimus. Palam autem quod passiones entis in quantum ens quedam sunt simplices et cum ente convertibiles, quedam vero sicut fertur sunt disiuncte. De simplicibus autem debet prior esse sermo. Est autem inter ceteras entis passiones disiunctas una de omnino erit prior sermo. Cuius ratio sit ista: quia illa passio disiuncta est omnino necessaria ad concludendum omnem aliam passionem de subiecto, sive simplicem sive disiunctam. Ordo igitur erit preposterus sic necessario commutatus. Passio autem illa est primum principium complexum, scilicet de quolibet affirmatio et negatio et de nullo simul".

and its property: an adequate subject requires that if it is posited while all other things are taken away, the property is posited; and that if the subject is taken away while all other things are posited, at the same time the property is removed.[162] On the basis of this criterion Bonet argues that the subject of metaphysics, being as being, is not the first adequate subject of the first complex principle.

Just as the quiddity of being founds the first principle through its proper *ratio*, the transcendental properties of being and the ultimate differences, which prescind from the quiddity of being, found the first principle in virtue of their proper *ratio*. In short, there is no first adequate subject, but everything positive, whether it be substance or accident, real being or being of reason, finite or infinite being, is the foundation of the first principle in virtue of its own intelligibility.[163] But Bonet again relativizes the negative conclusion by recalling the twofold distinction of being. The negative conclusion concerns being, which is the subject of metaphysics. If, however, being is not taken in the sense of one determinate *ratio* numerable against other quiddities, but in the sense of "everything positive", it is the first adequate subject of the first principle.[164]

Simpliciter transcendens *versus* aliqualiter transcendens

In book V of his *Metaphysics*, Bonet considers the simple properties (*passiones simplices*) that are convertible with being. He enumerates five properties: besides the three traditional transcendentals "unity", "truth" and "goodness", he mentions the notions "firstness" (*prioritas*) and *contrahibilitas*.[165] One aspect of his account deserves special attention.

Starting with "unity", Bonet advances the surprising thesis that transcendental unity is not a property *per se* convertible with being-as-being that is the subject of metaphysics. His account of this claim follows the same pattern as his argument for the dissociation of the

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[162] *Ibid.* (fol. 24rb).

[163] *Ibid.* (fol. 24rb): "Ex hoc concluditur quod non est dare primum subiectum primi principii primitate adequationis: nec subiectum huius metaphysice, nec aliquid aliud, sed quodlibet positivum fundat ipsum per rationem propriam (…), sive sit substantia sive accidens, ens reale sive ens rationis, ens finitum vel infinitum".

[164] *Ibid.* (fol. 24vb): "Respondeo ens sumptum pro omni positivo bene est subiectum primum et adequatum primi principii (…), sed ut sic non est subiectum metaphysice, cum non dicat unam rationem, sed omnes, ut libro primo huius metaphysicae fuit dictum".

[165] *Ibid.*, V, c. 1 (fol. 27rb).

first adequate subject of the first principle and the subject of metaphysics. It shows that the relations of implication between a first subject and its convertible property do not hold for being-as-being and unity. If being-as-being is not posited and is set aside, the implication is not that unity is removed, for "goodness" insofar as it prescinds from being is in itself one and founds its own unity. Being-as-being is therefore not the first subject of unity in general, if the reduplication of being is taken *inclusive*, that is, as including all possible causes of the inherence of unity in the subject. Instead, everything positive that is outside of nothing is undivided in itself and founds unity through its proper *ratio*.[166]

Unity that is "absolutely transcendental" (*simpliciter transcendens*) can be said to be a convertible property of "being", only if "being" is taken in the sense of *omne positivum* that is outside of nothing.[167] Bonet understands the unity of being-as-being as a unity to which the absolutely transcendental unity (*unitas simpliciter transcendens*) is contracted. It is this "contracted" unity that is convertible with the subject of metaphysics. Because it is the unity of the first and most common univocal predicate, the contracted unity can be called "transcendental in a certain respect (*aliqualiter transcendens*)", although not *simpliciter transcendens*.[168] Bonet interprets the difference between the two kinds of unity in terms of degrees of transcendentality—a typically Scotist doctrine that we encountered in Francis of Meyronnes and Peter Thomae. What is new, however, is that Bonet does not apply the gradation to different properties but to the same convertible property of being, differently conceived.

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[166] *Ibid.* (fol. 27rb–va): "Unitas transcendens non est per se convertibilis cum ente in quantum ens. Ens enim in quantum ens non est primum subiectum unitatis transcendentis prout li in quantum accipitur inclusive, quoniam illud quod est sic subiectum inclusive ipso posito omni alio circumscripto per possibile vel impossibile talis passio ponitur, et ipso circumscripto omni alio posito talis passio non ponitur. Ens autem in quantum ens quod est subiectum huius metaphysice, licet ipso posito ponatur unitas, ipso tamen non posito immo circumscripto per impossibile ipsa unitas non tollitur, nam bonitas ut prescindit ab ente ipsa est una et fundat propriam rationem. Et similiter differentie contrahentes ens et multa alia fundant etiam unitatem. Et breviter omne positivum quod est extra nihil est in se indivisum et fundamentum unitatis".

[167] *Ibid.* (fol. 28ra): "Et si adhuc queras si unitas simpliciter transcendens potest dici passio convertibilis cum ente, respondeo tibi quod sic: accipiendo pro significato entis omne positivum quod est extra nihil".

[168] *Ibid.* (fol. 27va): "Unitas ergo sic contracta et cum ente convertibilis potest unitas primi predicati univoci communissimi appellari. Et ideo si placet dicitur aliqualiter transcendens sicut et eius subiectum, licet non simpliciter transcendens".

Bonet introduces the same distinction in his discussion of transcendental truth and of transcendental goodness. Take, for instance, his exposition of "truth". The term has various meanings; the truth of a thing means that a thing is able to manifest itself (*manifestativa sui*) to the intellect—only truth in this sense is convertible with being according to Duns Scotus. But Bonet expressly rejects Scotus's conclusion, because other quiddities than that of being manifest themselves to the intellect. Truth *simpliciter transcendens* is not a property convertible with the subject of metaphysics, but only the truth contracted to the quiddity of being as distinct from other quiddities.[169]

Concluding observations

Bonet's metaphysics differs from Scotus's model in several respects: the separation of ontology and theology; the extension of the univocity of being to real being and being of reason; and a series of dissociations concerning the subject of metaphysics, being as being. It is dissociated from the first object of the intellect, the adequate subject of the first complex principle and the subject of the convertible transcendental properties. The background of these exclusions is the Scotist doctrine of the "formalities": "being" is understood as one determinate *ratio*, distinct from other quiddities. In line with Scotus, Bonet argues (in *Metaphysics* I, c. 6) that *ens* is not quidditatively predicated of the transcendental properties and the ultimate differences. The series of dissociations is a consequence of an "exclusive" understanding of the phrase "being-as-being". What does this mean for the transcendental character of Bonet's metaphysics?[170]

Bonet completes his series of dissociations in all cases with a positive conclusion by appealing to a twofold distinction of "being". From the metaphysical concept of being (as being) he distinguishes a more encompassing sense of being that signifies "all that is positive outside of nothing". When Bonet examines the various meanings of the term *res*, he observes that one of them signifies "every positive predicate".

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[169] *Ibid.*, c. 2 (fol. 30vb). Cf. Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, VI, q. 3, n. 26 (ed. Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera philosophica*, Vol. IV, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997, p. 66). For "goodness": Nicholas Bonet, *Metaphysica*, V, c. 3 (ed. Venice 1505, fol. 31va–b).

[170] For the question to what extent there are "supertranscendental" tendencies in his metaphysics, see ch. 15.3.

Res and *positivum*, he states, are convertible, not, however, *res* and *ens*, unless "being" is taken as "all that is positive".[171] "Being" in this sense is the first object of the intellect, the adequate subject of the first principle and the subject of the transcendental properties.

Bonet adopts the encompassing notion of "being" from Peter Auriol, the main critic of Duns Scotus in the fourteenth century. According to Auriol (see 10.1.1), the concept of "being" does not express one determinate *ratio*. The unity of this concept is that of complete indetermination, due to the lack of every distinguishing note; the *ratio* of being coincides with the *ratio* of every thing. Bonet does not consider, however, Auriol's perspective as an alternative to Scotus's model of metaphysics, but as a complement. He maintains that "being" taken as *omne positivum* cannot be the subject of metaphysics, because being in this sense is an equivocal term and does not have properties distinct from it. Only the univocity of the distinct *ratio* of being meets the conditions of a subject of science. Bonet attempts to connect the perspectives of Scotus and Auriol by constituting metaphysics as a science within a wider horizon of being in the sense of "all that is positive". He interprets the relation of the science of being to this wider horizon in terms of degrees of transcendentality. Metaphysics is the science of what is transcendental "in a certain respect" (*aliqualiter*).

10.5 Francis of Marchia

The most important thinker at the University of Paris in the period after Peter Auriol, that is, after 1320, was the Italian Franciscan Francis of Marchia (ca. 1290–after 1344). He lectured on the *Sentences* in Paris during the academic year 1319–20 and may have become master by 1323; thereafter he taught at the *studium* of the Franciscans at Avignon. His teaching career came to an end in 1328, when he got involved in the fierce conflict between his order and Pope John XXII on the ideal of "perfect poverty". Along with other Franciscans, including William of Ockham, Francis fled Avignon for the court of the German Emperor Louis of Bavaria in Munich. In the 40's, however, he fell into the hands of the Inquisition, abjured his views and became reconciled with the Church.[172]

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[171] *Nicholas* Bonet, *Metaphysica*, III, c. 1 (ed. Venice 1505, fol. 19va).

[172] For Marchia's life and work, cf. the "Introduction" by R. L. Friedman and C. Schabel to the special issue of *Vivarium* 44 (2006) devoted to Francis of Marchia,

Until recently little attention had been paid to Marchia's thought; he was fully overshadowed by his English contemporary William of Ockham. But in the last decades we can notice a development that has been called "the naissance of Marchia studies".[173] A remarkable *Metaphysics* commentary, so far attributed to an anonymous author, could unambiguously be identified as a writing of Francis; his extensive *Quodlibet*, of which the questions centre on the concept of being, and sections of his influential commentary on the *Sentences* have been edited for the first time. These works make clear that Francis, although standing in the Scotist tradition, is an original and independent mind. His reflections on the transcendentals and his conception of metaphysics appear to be innovative.[174]

In his *Quodlibet*, Francis examines whether the concept of "being" is the first concept of the intellect. This discussion leads to a new determination of what is transcendental and a new order of the notions *ens, res* and *aliquid*, in which "being" loses its priority (10.5.1). This change is reflected in the first question of Francis's commentary on the *Metaphysics*. He raises the traditional question as to the *subiectum* of this science, but substitutes in his reply the transcendental concept *res* for the notion of *ens*, a modification that does not have a basis in the Aristotelian model (10.5.2). Marchia's answer to the question as to the proper *subiectum metaphysicae* contains another peculiarity. He distinguishes two kinds of metaphysics (*duplex metaphysica*), a "general" metaphysics, dealing with *res in communi*, and a "particular" one, dealing with what is immaterial. This distinction expresses an important development in the history of metaphysics, because for the first time the "onto-theological" unity of First Philosophy is split up into two separate metaphysical sciences (10.5.3).

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pp. 1–20 (with a "Total Marchia Bibiography", pp. 15–20). Cf. also the Introduction in the new critical edition of Marchia's works in: *Opera Philosophica et Theologica*, Vol. II/1: *Reportatio IIA (Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum)*, qq. 1–12 (ed. T. Suarez-Nani / W. Duba / E. Babey / G. J. Etzkorn, Leuven 2008), pp. XIII–XXII.

[173] C. Schabel, *Theology at Paris, 1316–1345*, p. 191.

[174] The fundamental study is S. Folger-Fonfara, *Das 'Super'-Transzendentale und die Spaltung der Metaphysik. Der Entwurf des Franciscus von Marchia*, Leiden-Boston 2008 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 96).

10.5.1 *The new order of transcendental notions*

In the third *quaestio* of his *Quodlibet*, Francis questions the traditional primacy of "being": "Whether *ens* is the first concept of a thing (*prima rei intencio*)?"[175] He pursues the question in an original manner: Marchia first (i) clarifies what is meant by "first concept" and then (ii) distinguishes between two kinds of firstness: a material and a formal one. The *quaestio* can therefore be divided into two subquestions: (iii) Is "being" the materially first concept? and (iv) Is "being" the formally first concept? Both questions must be answered negatively according to Francis. The first concept in the material order is *res*, the first one in the formal order *aliquid*. Francis thus elaborates a new order of the transcendental concepts *res, ens* and *aliquid*.

The reduction to a first concept: intentio neutra *and the transcendental concepts*

Francis begins his analysis with a systematic reduction of our concepts to a first one. What kind of a notion is qualified for that primacy? Concepts can be divided into negative or privative and positive ones. A negative or privative concept cannot be the first concept of our intellect, because every negation presupposes an affirmation. The search for a first concept must thus be focused on positive notions; these can be divided into concepts of the first intention (e.g. "animal") and concepts of the second intention, that is, concepts of concepts (e.g. "genus" or "species"). A concept of the second intention cannot be the first, because it presupposes the concept of the first intention. But the latter concept cannot be first either; Francis introduces a new type of concept into his reduction that had thus far been traditional: a concept of the first intention presupposes a "neutral concept" (*intentio neutra*).[176]

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[175] Francis of Marchia, *Quodlibet*, q. 3 (ed. N. Mariani, Grottaferrata 1997 (Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 29), pp. 71–104): "Utrum intencio entis sit prima rei intencio".

[176] *Ibid.* (p. 72): "Ad oppositum [*corr.*: propositum]. Intencio priuatiua siue negatiua non potest esse prima rei intencio, quia supponit ante se intencionem affirmatiuam, in eo quod 'affirmacio est prior negacione'. Similiter intencio positiua secunde intencionis non potest esse prima simpliciter, quia presupponit primam intencionem. Similiter intencio prime intencionis non potest esse prima quia presupponit neutram intencionem communem". Marchia's notion of *intentio neutra* seems to be unique; it is not mentioned in the index of L. M. de Rijk's monumental study *Giraldus Odonis*

What is a "neutral" concept? Francis does not say much about the notion he introduces: it is neither a concept of the first intention nor a concept of the second intention, but common to both, such as the concept of "being" that is formally included in both concepts.[177] But in the fifth *quaestio* of his *Quodlibet* he deals with this notion at length.

Marchia raises the question: "What is *per se* in a category?"[178] The traditional view is that only a real being or a concept of the first intention is *per se* (and not "by reduction" to something else) in a predicament, because the doctrine of the categories is a division of extra-mental being. But Francis rejects this position; he argues that a being of reason or a concept of the second intention is not in a category by reduction to a real being, but *per se*. Although *ens reale* and *ens rationis* have different modes of being, being as such (*ens absolute*) possesses the same mode of being in both, since it formally exists in real being as well as in being of reason.[179] Hence, there is a common concept that is formally included in concepts of the first intention and in those of the second intention and is thus neutral with respect to them.[180]

Francis defines the neutral intention as "that which as such is not made by the intellect (*non est facta per intellectum*)". From this it does not follow that a neutral concept is a real concept, for which it is typical that "it is as such not-made by the intellect (*est non facta per intellectum*)". The feature "what as such is not made by the intellect" must be distinguished from the feature "what is as such not-made by the intellect" on the basis of the place of the syncategorematic term "not" (*non*) in the two descriptions. Marchia illustrates this through an example: The proposition "man is as such not an ass" (*non est*

O.F.M., Opera Philosophica vol. II: De intentionibus. Critical Edition with a Study on the Medieval Intentionality Debate up to ca. 1350, Leiden-Boston 2005 (Studien und Texte zur *Geistesgeschichte* des Mittelalters, 86).

[177] Francis of Marchia, *Quodlibet*, q. 3 (ed. Mariani, p. 71): "quedam vero, sunt neutre: neque prime, neque secunde, sed communes ad utramque sicud est forte intencio entis, que includitur formaliter in utraque intencione tam prima quam secunda".

[178] *Ibid.*, q. 5, a. 3 (pp. 193–205): "Que sint per se in predicamento".

[179] *Ibid.* (p. 202): "Aliter posset dici quod, licet ens racionis habeat alium modum essendi quam ens reale, tamen ens absolute eundem modum essendi habet in utrisque quia in utroque ens existit fomaliter, quia utrumque, tam ens reale quam ens racionis, est ens; unde, licet ens racionis non sit formaliter in eo in quo tamen in se est formaliter aliquid, et eciam est formaliter ens".

[180] *Ibid.* (p. 200): "(…) illa intencio inclusa quiditative in ente reali et in ente racionis est intencio formaliter neutra, nec est intencio racionis nec realis, set neutra".

asinus) is true, whereas the proposition "man is as such a non-ass" (*est non-asinus*) is false. The definition of the neutral concept states that the concept is not made by the intellect, without thereby identifying it with a real concept (to be defined as: "is not-made by the intellect").[181]

What concepts are neutral? In *Quodlibet*, q. 3, Francis offers as an example the concept of "being". In fact, it is one of the meanings of "being", for this notion can be taken in different ways; in one sense "being" is a concept common to quidditative concepts of the first and the second intention.[182] In the continuation of his analysis in the third *Quodlibet*, Marchia relates neutral concepts to the transcendental notions in general. This step changes the nature of these notions. As we have seen in the section on Francis of Meyronnes (see 10.2), fourteenth-century authors attributed a transcendental character to some second intentions, such as the concept of *transcendens*. But at the same time they preserved a clear distinction between transcendental notions of the second intention and those of the first intention, among which "being" is primary. Marchia, however, goes a step further.

He interprets the *transcendentia* as *intentiones neutrae*, common to concepts of the first and to concepts of the second intention. In this way they acquire a status that was attributed to the *supertranscendentia* in the sixteenth century. "Supertranscendentals" are notions, which again surpass the transcendentals in the sense that they include both real being and being of reason (see ch. XV). In terms of this

[181] *Ibid.* (p. 201): "Respondeo quod non sequitur, quia differt dicere: 'non est facta secundum se per intellectum' et 'est secundum se non facta per intellectum', sicud differt dicere: 'homo secundum se non est asinus', et 'homo secundum se est non-asinus', quia prima est uera, secunda falsa. Consimiliter dico quod illa intencio neutra 'secundum se non est facta per intellectum', non tamen est 'secundum se non facta per intellectum'. Nunc autem, licet secundum se intencio non sit facta per intellectum sicud intencio realis, non tamen oportet quod intencio, que secundum se non est facta per intellectum, sit intencio realis, quia intencio communis ad utramque non est secundum se facta per intellectum et tamen non est realis".

[182] Cf. the senses of "being" that Francis lists in his commentary on the *Sentences*, I, prol. q. 10 (ed. N. Mariani, Grottaferrata 2003 (Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 31), pp. 594–596): "Ad hoc igitur uidendum, est sciendum quod ens potest accipi quadrupliciter. Primo, generalissime, pro intencione communissima, communi cuicumque intencioni positiue uel negatiue, complexe uel incomplexe, [uel] existenti in anima uel extra. (…) Secundo, magis stricte, potest accipi pro intencione positiua, communi ad omnem intencionem incomplexam tantum, siue tamen illa sit in re, siue in anima. (…) Tercio, potest adhuc magis stricte sumi pro intencione communi ad intencionem incomplexam quiditatiuam, distinctam contra denominatiuam (…). Quarto, potest accipi ut dicit intencionem communem ad intencionem quiditatiuam prime intencionis tantum, non secunde, quia sic sumitur tercio modo".

later development, one could say that Francis gives the transcendentals themselves a supertranscendental character by determining them as neutral concepts.

In the ongoing reduction to a first concept in *Quodlibet*, q. 3, Francis divides the neutral concepts, and as a consequence the transcendental notions, into two groups: the quidditative, such as *res*, *ens* and *aliquid*, and the qualitative or denominative concepts, such as *unum, verum* and *bonum*, which rather designate a property. A qualitative neutral concept cannot be the first concept, since it presupposes a quidditative concept. Francis's analysis comes to an end in the conclusion that the first concept in the absolute sense must be an *intentio neutra positive quidditativa*.[183]

The distinction between a quidditative and a qualitative transcendental determination is usual in the Scotist tradition. What is new, however, is that Marchia presents *three* quidditative first notions: not only *ens*, but also the Arab transcendentals *res* and *aliquid*. His charge is to explain how this "trio", which Aureoli regarded to be synonyms, is related to the conceptual primacy.

Pluralization of the first concept: Material and formal priority

After having demonstrated through a systematic reduction what kind of concept is a first concept, Marchia differentiates the notion of "firstness" (*prioritas*): he distinguishes between two kinds of firstness, a material one and a formal one, which he clarifies by a series of terms.[184]

The material priority is the "firstnes of a substrate" (*prioritas substrata*): something underlies something else in the way matter is related to form, the subject to its accidents, and the foundation to its properties. Another telling expression is "priority of *substraction*", which is

[183] Francis of Marchia, *Quodlibet*, q. 3 (ed. Mariani, p. 72): "Intencionum autem neutrarum positiuarum quedam sunt quiditatiue sicud est intencio rei, intencio entis et aliquid, que dicunt quid; quedam sunt denominatiue siue qualitatiue sicud intencio unius, ueri et boni simpliciter; secundum qualitatem dicuntur, que magis dicunt racionem passionum quam quiditatis. (…) Similiter intencio neutra communis denominatiua siue qualitatiua non potest esse prima, quia presupponit primam quidditatiuam. Prima igitur rei intencio simpliciter est intencio neutra positiua quidditatiua".

[184] *Ibid.* (p. 72): "Hiis visis, distinguendum est de prioritate, que est duplex: prioritas materialis et formalis".

called "material", since the prior in this order relates *materialiter* to the posterior, and which is also called "priority of origin".[185]

The formal priority, by contrast, is a "firstness of *abstraction*", by which something is simpler and more abstract than something else, just as the higher in the order of predicates (*linea predicamentalis*) is prior to the inferior. This firstness implies a certain indetermination with respect to a plurality and is called "formal", since the prior in this order relates as something *formale* to the posterior.[186]

The distinction between material and formal firstness seems to be suggested by the predicative structure of a proposition, in which the subject term is materially related to the predicate, and conversely, the predicate term is formally related to the subject. Francis applies the resolution into a first concept to both orders. A reduction in the formal order to a highest and most general predicate was familiar to medieval thought; what is new is the conceptual resolution in the material order, a reduction to a "basic" concept that is the *fundamentum* of others. Marchia's model is Aristotle's notion of "first substance", which is first, just because it is the "subject" of all other determinations.[187]

Francis introduces the distinction between a material and a formal priority with the intention of pluralizing the idea of a first concept: there is a materially first concept of substraction and a formally first concept of abstraction. Based on this differentiation he is able to reformulate the original *quaestio* ("Is *ens* the *prima intentio* of a thing?") in two subquestions or "articuli": "Is 'being' the substractively first

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[185] *Ibid.* (pp. 72–73): "Quedam, prioritas materialis, est prioritas substrata, qua aliquid substernitur alteri ad modum quo materia substernitur forme et subiectum subest suis accidentibus, et fundamentum suis proprietatibus ac racionibus fundatis in ipso. (…) Et hec prioritas substraccionis dicitur prioritas materialis, quia prius in illo ordine se habet materialiter uel quasi materialiter respectu posterioris, et hec prioritas uocatur, secundum quosdam, prioritas originis vel generacionis".

[186] *Ibid.* (p. 73): "Prioritas uero formalis, e conuerso, est prioritas abstraccionis, qua aliquid est simplicius et abstraccius alio, quomodo superius, in linea predicamentali, est prius suo inferiori, quia est simplicius et abstraccius eo: et hec est prioritas cuiusdam indeterminacionis siue illacionis (*corr.*: illimitationis) ad plura, et dicitur hec prioritas formalis, quia prius, in illo ordine, est formale uel quasi formale respectu posteriorum".

[187] *Ibid.*: "et secundum istum modum prioritatis substancia prima est prior substancia secunda et omnibus accidentibus, secundum Philosophum in *Predicamentis*, quia substancia prima ideo dicitur prima, quia substernitur omnibus superioribus et omnibus accidentibus, et sibi non substernitur aliquid aliud inferius ipsa, propter quod Philosophus dicit quod substancia prima est de qua omnia alia dicuntur sicud de subiecto, et ipsa non dicitur de alico alio sicud de subiecto".

concept so that it underlies all other concepts?" (art. 1); and "Is 'being' the abstractively first concept so that it is more abstract and simpler than all other concepts?" (art. 2).[188]

Not "being" (ens)*, but "thing"* (res) *is the materially first concept*

Before Marchia proceeds to the treatment of both questions, he discusses a preliminary problem, namely, how "being" has to be understood here. He offers a succinct summary of the meanings of this term: *Ens* can be taken in three ways. In a first mode, it signifies the act of being (*actus essendi*): "being" in this sense is different from "thing" and later than that concept. Secondly, "being" signifies the composition of a predicate with a subject; this meaning refers to the logical function of "to be" as copula in a proposition. In a third way "being" as such (*secundum se*) signifies the entity (*entitas*) of a thing. This third sense is meant in the present question concerning "being" as the first concept.[189] Interestingly, Francis attaches to the different meanings of "being" some implications concerning the structure of science. If "being" is taken in its first sense, that is, as "act of being", it is a demonstrable property (*passio demonstrabilis*) of a thing. If "being" is taken, not in its first, but in its third sense, that is, as "entity", it is the subject in metaphysics (*subiectum in methaphysica*).[190]

The question as to the materially first concept concentrates on the relation between *ens* in the sense of "entity" and *res*. In a number of sometimes rather complicated arguments, Francis contends that

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[188] *Ibid.* (pp. 73–74): "Et secundum hoc, illa questio habet 2os articulos principales, secundum duos modos prioritatis predictos. Primus articulus est: utrum intencio entis sit simpliciter prima rei intencio substractiue, ita quod ipsa substernatur omnibus aliis rei intencionibus et nulla alia intencio rei substernatur sibi, set ipsa omnibus aliis substernatur mediate uel inmediate. 2^{s} articulus questionis est: utrum intencio entis sit simpliciter prima rei intencio abstractiue, ita quod null alia sit abstracior, set ipsa sit abstracior et simplicior omnibus aliis intencionibus".

[189] *Ibid.*, q. 3, a. 1 (pp. 78–79): "Sciendum quod ens potest accipi tripliciter: uno modo, secundum quod dicit actum essendi (…) et sic accipiendo ens, planum est quod intencio entis est alia ab intencione rei et posterior ipsa; secundo modo, potest accipi ens ut dicit actum conposicionis predicati cum subiecto (…): tertio modo, potest accipi ipsum ens secundum se, simpliciter et absolute, (…) ut dicit entitatem cuiuslibet rei (…). Prout dicit entitatem rei in communi (…) de ente sic accepto est questio".

[190] *Ibid.* (pp. 78–79): "Certum est quod ens secundum quod ens est subiectum in methaphysica: non dicit actum essendi, quia accidit subiecto alicuius sciencie quod sit in effectu; nec accipit ibi ens ut dicit actum conposicionis quia, ut sic, non est subiectum sciencie (…). Si igitur accipiatur primo modo, ut dicit actum essendi, sic ens est passio demonstrabilis".

"thing" is the first and common concept *substractive* that underlies all other concepts. One of his arguments is based on the structure of a proposition, exemplified in the statement: "This whiteness is whiteness, colour, quality and being". The predicates that are contained in "this whiteness" are one thing (*una res*), for otherwise they could not formally be predicated of the subject. They are, however, not formally one thing, since the predicates "whiteness", "colour", "quality" and "being" are formally distinct. They are thus materially one thing and, consequently, the concept "thing" (*intentio rei*) underlies all of them.[191] From this example it is also evident that "being" is not the substractively first concept: it is not *substrata materialiter*, but quidditatively included in "whiteness" and "colour" and thus higher in the order of general predicates.[192]

Marchia concludes that *res*, not *ens*, is the first concept in the order of material priority, because it is the *fundamentum* of all concepts in a thing. He recognizes, however, that "being" is a first concept in a specific sense, namely, insofar as it is the "first real feature" (*prima ratio realis*) in such a foundation. But a *ratio realis* is different from and later than the thing of which it is the real feature.[193]

Not "being", but "something" (aliquid) *is the formally first concept*

Francis's example of "this whiteness" mentions an ascending series of general predicates, i.e. "whiteness", "colour", "quality", that culminate in "being". This series could suggest that "being" is the first concept according to the formal or abstractive order. That is, however, not

[191] *Ibid.* (p. 86): "Reduco argumentum: intencio substrata omnibus rei intencionibus est alia ab intencione non substrata ei<s>; set intencio rei substernitur omnibus, sic: hec albedo est albedo, color, qualitas, ens sunt una res; igitur non sunt diuerse res, quia tunc una non predicaretur de alia formaliter per se; set ita non sunt una res formaliter, cum formaliter sint distincta; igitur una materialiter; igitur intencio rei est substrata omnibus eis".

[192] *Ibid.*: "Probacio alterius partis: quod intencio entis non sit eis substrata, probo dupliciter: primo sic: quia intencio superior non substernitur inferioribus; set intencio entis est superior omnibus intencionibus istis; igitur etc. Preterea, intencio inclusa quidditatiue in alico non est substrata materialiter in illo; set intencio entis est inclusa quidditatiue in albedine et colore; igitur non est eis substrata materialiter; intencio autem rei est eis materialiter substrata; igitur etc.".

[193] *Ibid.* (p. 89): "Dico igitur quod intencio rei est fundamentum omnium intencionum existencium in re; intencio autem entis est prima intencio et prima racio realis in huiusmodi fundamento; racio autem realis uel formalis respectu rei habentis multas raciones reales est aliud ab ipsa re cuius est racio realis uel formalis: et ideo entitas differt ab ipsa re".

the case: Marchia's claim is that *aliquid* or the corresponding abstract term *aliquitas* ("somethingness") has a greater extension *(lacior*) than *ens* or any other concept.

His argument for this position starts with a general principle that can be regarded as typical of an abstractive prior concept. A positive concept, which is quidditatively included in another positive concept, has a greater extension than the concept including it (as in the example cited "being" is more extensive than "quality") and is therefore prior. Now the concept *aliquid* is included in the concept of "entity" and the other transcendental concepts. Therefore, the concept *aliquid* has a greater extension than the concept *ens*.[194] What needs further explanation is the minor premise in this syllogism, claiming the inclusion of "something" in the transcendental concepts.

The introduction of *aliquid* is Francis's solution for a problem inherent to the Scotist view of the difference between the convertible *transcendentia*. Scotus teaches that these notions differ not merely conceptually from each other, but by a formal distinction. *Entitas* is formally distinct from *unitas*, *veritas* and *bonitas*, with the result that the latter determinations are formally a "non-being". This does not mean, however, that they are "nothing", but what are they then? Marchia's answer is that, because they are not "nothing", they are "something". In his mind, *aliquid* has the function of offering a remedy for the formal diversity of transcendental concepts.[195] "Being", "one", "true" and "good" are "something"; *aliquid* is quidditatively included

[194] *Ibid.*, a. 2 (p. 94): "dico quod conceptus aliquitas est lacior formaliter conceptu entitatis. Quod declaro sic: conceptus positivus inclusus quidditative in conceptu positivo est lacior altero illorum includentium; set conceptus aliquitatis includitur quidditative in conceptu entitatis, unitatis, veritatis et bonitatis (…): ergo conceptus aliquitatis est lacior conceptu entitatis".

[195] *Ibid.* (p. 101): "Si primo modo [conceptus aliquitatis] conparatur ad conceptus transcendentes, sic potest dici quod est conceptus uniocus ita quod ens, unum, uerum et bonum conueniant uniuoce in conceptu aliquitatis. Quod probatur: quia aliud est dicere 'unitas est aliquid' quam 'unitas est unitas'; similliter 'ueritas est ueritas' quam 'ueritas est aliquid'; ergo conceptus aliquitatis est alius a conceptu unitatis, ueritatis, etc. Si ergo conceptus aliquitatis conparatur ad istos conceptus transcendentes, potest dici quod est uniuocus eis". The same idea can be found in his *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam* I, q. 1 (ed. A. Zimmermann, in: id., *Ontologie oder Metaphysik? Die Diskussion über den Gegenstand der Metaphysik im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert. Texte und Untersuchung*, Leuven 1998 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales. Bibliotheca, 1), p. 95): "Dices: Ergo illae passiones entis sunt formaliter non ens, et ita erunt nihil. Respondeo: Non sequitur 'sunt formaliter non ens, ergo nihil', quia 'nihil' est universalius quam non ens, sicut aliquid est universalius ipso ente".

in the transcendentals. *Ens*, by contrast, is not formally included in the concepts of "unity" and "goodness", for otherwise it would be nugatory (*nugatio*) to say *ens bonum* or *ens unum*. "Being" is therefore not the first concept abstractively.[196]

In Francis's arguments for the primacy of *aliquid* over *ens*, a weighty consideration is that the two concepts have different opposites and that this difference casts light on their respective extensions. The opposite of "being" is "non-being" (*non ens*), which does not remove every positive concept, because "being" is not quidditatively included in the other transcendental determinations. "Nothing" (*nihil*), on the other hand, does remove every positive concept and is the opposite of *aliquid*. The more extensive a negation is in removing, the more extensive the opposed affirmation is in predicating. Therefore, no positive concept is more universal than "something".[197] Marchia concludes that the concept of *aliquid* is the most extensive of all concepts and is thus the first object (*primum obiectum*) of the intellect, the condition of intelligibility.[198]

10.5.2 *The subject of metaphysics: "Thing as thing"*

The three concepts *ens, res* and *aliquid*, whose mutual relations Francis examines in his *Quodlibet*, are central to the first *quaestio* of his *Metaphysics* commentary. What immediately stands out is the unusual way in which the "basic" question of medieval metaphysics is posed here: "Is thing as thing (*res secundum quod res*) the subject of metaphysics

[196] Francis of Marchia, *Quodlibet*, q. 3, a. 2 (ed. Mariani, p. 94): "quia entitas, ut distinguitur formaliter ab unitate, est aliquid, cum non sit nihil; similiter veritas et bonitas sunt formaliter aliquid; conceptus autem entitatis non includitur formaliter in conceptu unitatis et bonitatis, quia tunc esset nugacio dicere: ens bonum; ens unum; ergo conceptus aliquitatis est lacior conceptu entitatis".

[197] *Ibid.* (p. 94): "Probacio assunpti: 'nichil' opponitur per se 'alicui' directe nisi racione sui oppositi inclusi; set 'nichil' opponitur per se et non per accidens cuilibet conccptui positiui entis, unitatis, ueritatis et bonitatis; ergo oppositum 'nichili', quod est 'aliquid', includitur quiditatiue in quolibet istorum". *Ibid.* (p. 98): "Item, quanto alica negacio est in remouendo uniuersalior, tanto affirmacio sibi opposita est uniuersalior in predicando; set nulla negacio est uniuersalior ipso 'nichil', quod per se opponitur 'alicui'; ergo nullus conceptus positiuus est uniuersalior in predicando quam conceptus aliquitatis".

[198] *Ibid.* (pp. 99–100): "Sic ergo uidetur dicendum quod conceptus aliquitatis est conceptus latisimus inter omnes conceptus, quia nullus conceptus lacior nec eque latus, set iste est simpliciter lacior et uniuersalior omni alio conceptu: et iste est primum obiectum intellectus, et non ens, neque unum, nec bonum".

or something else?"[199] Whereas, as we have seen, Marchia maintains in the *Quodlibet* that "being" in the sense of "entity" of a thing is the subject of metaphysics, in his *Metaphysics* commentary the traditional phrase "being as being" is replaced by the term "thing".

Francis's version of the question reflects the impact of Avicenna's notion of "thing" on medieval philosophy. At the same time he seems to draw a conclusion from Avicenna's account of the relation between "being" and "thing", which the Arab philosopher himself does not make. According to Avicenna being qua being is the proper subject of First Philosophy, in spite of the fact that his doctrine of the first conceptions of the intellect suggests a certain priority of *res* over *ens* (see ch. 2.4.2). Francis, in the first *quaestio* of his *Metaphysics* commentary, is prepared to take this firstness into account.

In his reply, Marchia compares the concept of *res* with what is "higher" (*superius*) in the conceptual order, what is "equal" (*aequale*) and what is "lower" (*inferius*). (i) What is "higher" than *res* is the notion *aliquid* ("something"), which is "formally common to all *transcendentia*". Because of this commonness *aliquid* distinguishes itself from the transcendentals, for the latter notions are formally distinct from one another according to the Scotist view. Francis's account in the *Quodlibet* renders the special position of *aliquid* intelligible: it is the first concept in the formal order and the most extensive of all concepts. *Aliquid* is "higher" than the transcendental predicates; it is as it were a "supertranscendental" notion. (ii) What is "equal" are the notions convertible with "thing", like the transcendentals "being", "one", "true" and "good". The transcendental level is the place proper to *res*. (iii) What is "lower" and stands under "thing" as to generality are determinations like "substance", "quality", "quantity" etc., that is, the categories.[200] Having so positioned *res* in the hierarchical order of concepts in this manner, Francis next analyzes the relation of "thing" to the (i) supertranscendental, (ii) transcendental and (iii) categorial determinations in order to establish the subject of metaphysics.

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[199] Francis of Marchia, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, I, q. 1 (ed. Zimmermann, pp. 84–98); an analysis of the question on pp. 348–373.

[200] *Ibid.* (p. 85): "Respondeo, quod res potest comparari ad tria: Primo ad suum superius vel ad aliquid, quod est commune formaliter omnibus transcendentibus. Secundo ad suum aequale convertibile cum eo, scilicet ad ens et unum, verum, bonum, quae sunt convertibilia cum eo. Tertio ad suum inferius, scilicet ad substantiam, qualitatem, quantitatem et sic de aliis, quae sunt inferiora re".

(i) Marchia's first conclusion is negative: nothing that is higher than *res* can be the *primum subiectum* of metaphysics; consequently, *aliquid* cannot be the subject searched for. He advances two arguments for this conclusion, both of which are based on the "supertranscendental" commonness of *aliquid*. The first argument refers to the structure of every science: it has a subject and has properties that can be demonstrated of the subject and are thus different from the subject. But *aliquid* does not have properties that are distinguishable from it; in the final analysis, every property appears to be "something". *Aliquid* is therefore not the *subiectum* of metaphysics.[201] The other argument contends that the same, under the same formal aspect, cannot be the subject of distinct sciences. But if *aliquid* were the subject of metaphysics, the consequence would be that it also is the subject of logic, since the subjects of the two sciences have the same extension and nothing else has a scope equal to *aliquid*. Metaphysics and logic are, however, distinct sciences. Hence *aliquid* cannot be the subject of metaphysics.[202]

Francis had already elaborated upon the presuppositions of the second argument—the agreement and the difference between metaphysics and logic—in the prologue to his commentary. There he presents a survey of the sciences, in which both metaphysics and logic appear as a *scientia communis*, because they are concerned with things common to all (*omnibus communes*). But a fundamental difference still remains: metaphysics deals with things common to all beings of the first intention, that is, real beings, like being, one, true and good.

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[201] *Ibid.*: "Primo, quod nihil superius ipsa re secundum se est primum subiectum metaphysicae. Patet primo: Quia subiectum cuiuscumque scientiae habet proprias passiones de ipso demonstrabiles extra suam rationem existentes. Sed aliquid, secundum quod est superius ad unum et ens, verum, bonum, non habet aliquas passiones de ipso demonstrabiles, cum ipsum, ut sic sit commune ad subiectum cuiuscumque scientiae, <non> est resolubile in priora re vel ratione. Sed aliquid secundum se non est resolubile in priora re vel ratione, cum ad ipsum stet ultima resolutio quorumcumque. Quare aliquid non est subiectum metaphysicae".

[202] *Ibid.* (pp. 85–86): "Secundo, quia idem sub eadem ratione formali non potest esse subiectum diversarum scientiarum. Sed si aliquid esset subiectum metaphysicae primum, eadem ratione esset subiectum primum logicae, cum logicus et metaphysicus sint aequalis ambitus quantum ad subiectum. Nihil autem est aequalis ambitus cum ipso aliquid. Metaphysica autem et logica sunt diversae scientiae. Quare aliquid non potest esse subiectum metaphysicae, quia idem subiectum eadem ratione esset primum subiectum metaphysicae et logicae".

Logic, by contrast, treats common things of the second intention, like "universal" and "particular".[203]

Marchia eliminates *aliquid* as a candidate for the subject of metaphysics, since it apparently possesses such generality that the difference between metaphysical and logical commonness would be removed. It seems that the concept of *aliquid* alone counts as an *intentio neutra* absolutely, common to things of the first and of the second intention. In his *Quodlibet*, Francis maintains that *aliquid* as the abstractively first concept is the first *obiectum* of the intellect. Its elimination as the subject of metaphysics therefore means that in his thought the "subject" of metaphysics and the "object" of the intellect are dissociated.

(ii) The comparison of *res* to its equals, the transcendental determinations, also results in a negative conclusion: nothing that is convertible with "thing" as such can be the first subject of metaphysics. Francis argues that a property cannot be the subject of the first science, because the subject is that to which the properties are attributed. Now "entity" and "unity", that is, "being" and "one" considered abstractly, are properties of "thing", taken abstractly. Therefore, neither "being" nor "one" can be the subject of metaphysics.[204]

The most striking aspect of the argument is the claim in the minor premise that "being" is a property of "thing". According to Marchia this is evident by "authority" (*auctoritas*) and "reason" (*ratio*). The authority is Avicenna, whose statements in his *Metaphysics* leave no doubt that the concept of *ens* is concomitant with the concept of *res*. Now the expression "concomitant" implies a relation of "posterior" and "prior"; therefore, *secundum intentionem Avicennae* the concept of "being" is posterior to that of "thing".[205] The "rational" proof argues

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[203] *Ibid.*, prooem. (ed. R. L. Friedman, in: S. Folger-Fonfara, "Franziskus von Marchia: Die erste Unterscheidung einer Allgemeinen und einer Besonderen Metaphysik [Appendix]", in: *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 16 (2005), pp. 502–513, here pp. 504–505).

[204] *Ibid.*, I, q. 1 (ed. A. Zimmermann, p. 86): "Secundo dico, quod nihil convertibile cum ipsa re simpliciter vel distinctum est primum subiectum metaphysicae. Quod patet: Quia nulla proprietas (…) est primum subiectum primae scientiae, quia subiectum primae scientiae est illud, cui attribuuntur primae passiones, non autem aliqua istarum passionum. Entitas autem et unitas sunt proprietates ipsius rei abstractae. Ergo nec ens nec unum nec quodcumque simile potest esse subiectum metaphysicae".

[205] *Ibid.* (p. 86): "Maior [*leg.*: Minor] patet auctoritate et ratione. (…) Hoc autem sequitur in Metaphysica Avicennae. (…) Ex quo patet secundum intentionem Avicennae, quod intentio entis concomitatur intentionem rei. Sed intentio posterior concomitatur intentionem prioris". Cf. Avicenna latinus, *Liber de philosophia prima sive*

that concepts whose opposites are distinct are themselves distinct. Now "non-being" is different from "non-thing", but the argument does not state that in which the proper difference consists. Francis concludes that "being" is not the first concept (*prima intentio*) and consequently cannot be the subject of metaphysics.[206]

(iii) The comparison of *res* to the lower concepts leads to the conclusion that "thing in general" (*res in communi*) is the subject of metaphysics. This phrase must not be understood in the sense that it includes things of the first intention as well as things of the second intention, that is, logical entities. Francis's concern again is to maintain the distinction between metaphysics and logic. The commonness of *res* refers only to things of the first intention.[207] First Philosophy is a "transcendental" science that must study what is "real".

Marchia's aim in the first *quaestio* in his *Metaphysics* commentary is to reconsider the primacy of "being". That "being" is not the first concept of the intellect is also the result of the analysis in the third quodlibetal question. *Res* appears to be the "substractively" first concept, the "foundation" of all other concepts. As we have seen, Francis, in this *Quodlibet*, distinguishes between different meanings of "being", to which he attaches some implications concerning the structure of science. These enlighten his account in the first question of the *Metaphysics* commentary. If "being" is taken as "act of being", it is a demonstrable property of a thing. This might be the motive for his presentation of *res inquantum res* as the subject of metaphysics, for this science does not only deal with what actually exists. Later in the commentary, however, Marchia uses the notions of *res* and *ens* as synonyms; apparently, he then takes "being" in the sense of the essential being or "reality" of a thing.

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scientia divina, I, c. 5 (ed. S. Van Riet, Louvain-Leiden 1977, p. 36): "Nec separabitur a comitantia intelligendi ens cum illa ullo modo, quoniam intellectus de ente semper comitabitur illam, quia illa habet esse vel in singularibus vel in aestimatione vel intellectu. Si autem non esset ita, tunc non esset res".

[206] Francis of Marchia, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, I, q. 1 (ed. A. Zimmermann, p. 86): "Item probatur: Quia quorum opposita sunt distincta, ipsa sunt distincta. Sed intentio non entis et intentio non rei sunt intentiones distinctae, quia aliud est dicere non ens et aliud est dicere non res. Ergo intentio entis, cum non sit prima intentio, non erit primum subiectum metaphysicae".

[207] *Ibid.* (p. 87): "Prima conclusio est, quod res in communi, ut est communis ad rem primae intentionis et ad rem secundae intentionis, non est subiectum in metaphysica, sed solum ut est communis ad omnem rem primae intentionis".

10.5.3 Duplex metaphysica: *The splitting up of metaphysics*

1. In the discussion of the subject of metaphysics in the first *quaestio* of his *Metaphysics* commentary, Marchia presents another innovative conception. He raises an objection that points to a paradox with respect to the place of this discipline in the order of sciences: it is both the first and the last science. On the one hand, metaphysics is the first discipline, a primacy that seems to be the consequence of its becoming a transcendental science. The prior and better known to us the subject of a science is, it is argued, the prior that science is in the order of learning. Now "being" and "thing" are the first conceptions of the intellect, as Avicenna teaches—a doctrine that plays a prominent role in Francis's reflections. But on the other hand, metaphysics is, again according to Avicenna, the last science and the completion of human thought. Viewed from this final perspective, *res* or *ens* does not seem to be the subject of this discipline, for in that case metaphysics would not be the last science.[208]

Marchia's reply is surprising insofar as he accepts the idea entertained in the objection that metaphysics is the first and the last science, not, however, in the sense of a tension *within* one and the same science but as indicating two distinct metaphysical sciences. He draws the remarkable conclusion that metaphysics is twofold (*duplex metaphysica*), a general (*communis*) and a particular (*particularis*) metaphysics. The subject of general metaphysics is the thing as thing (*res secundum quod res*), not contracted to a thing of a determinate genus, but common to all things of the first intention. The subject of particular metaphysics, by contrast, is the immaterial thing (*res separata a materia*).[209] Both sciences can be called 'metaphysics'—a name

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[208] *Ibid.* (pp. 84–85): "Item: Quanto subiectum alicuius scientiae est prius et nobilius [*corr.*: notius] quoad nos, tanto illa scientia erit prior ordine doctrinae, cum intellectus noster procedat a notioribus nobis ad ignotiora, I Physicorum. Sed ens et res sunt priora et notiora nobis omnibus suis inferioribus, secundum Avicennam I Metaphysicae (…). Ergo scientia de re et de ente est prior ordine doctrinae omnibus scientiis suorum inferiorum. Metaphysica autem est ultima vel paenultima secundum Avicennam I Metaphysicae et Philosophum IV Ethicorum. Ergo primum obiectum metaphysicae non est res nec ens".

[209] *Ibid.* (pp. 88–89): "Quarta conclusio: Quod duplex est metaphysica, quaedam communis, et quaedam propria sive particularis. (…) Secundum hoc dico, quod subiectum metaphysicae communis primum est res secundum quod res est, non contracta ad aliquam rem determinati generis (…), sed est res simpliciter communis ad rem primae intentionis. Subiectum vero metaphysicae particularis est res separata a

that Marchia explains as *metas physice transcendens* ("surpassing the bounds of physics"). They transcend, however, physics in different ways: general metaphysics because it deals with what is common to things, particular metaphysics because its subject matter is the immaterial.[210] In Marchia's thought the ambivalence of the medieval term *transcendens* (see ch. I) becomes a real duplicity, insofar as he distinguishes a metaphysics in the sense of a transcendental science from a metaphysics that is science of the transcendent.

The title "First Philosophy" belongs to the discipline that is first in the order of intellectual knowledge and is therefore related by Marchia to general metaphysics, dissociated from the consideration of God in particular metaphysics. His view resembles Nicholas Bonet's conception, who claims that "our metaphysics" is the first science in the order of knowledge, since it only deals with *pure metaphysicalia* and excludes theological topics. But Marchia differs from Bonet, insofar as he understands both sciences, which he distinguishes, as "metaphysics". In the prologue to his *Metaphysics* commentary, he presents a comprehensive division of the sciences, in which *metaphysics communis* precedes all particular sciences, and *metaphysica specialis* is the last of them; it comes after physics, mathematics and politics, and is the ultimate end (*finis*) of human knowledge.[211]

2. Francis's claim of a "twofold metaphysics" is a turning point in the genealogy of metaphysics. Systematically, his position can be seen as

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materia secundum rationem et secundum rem". Francis also deals with this distinction at three other places in his work: the *prooemium* of his *Metaphysics* commentary (ed. R. L. Friedman, pp. 502–513), *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*,VI, q. 16 (ed. A. Zimmermann, pp. 98–100) and *In Sententiarum*, prol., q. 2 (ed. Mariani, pp. 370–374).

[210] Francis of Marchia, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, I, q. 1 (ed. A. Zimmermann, p. 89): "Et utraque potest vocari metaphysica, licet diversimode, quia utraque transcendit metas physicae, quia utraque est de entibus abstractis, sed una positive, alia privative". *In Sententiarum*, prol., q. 2 (ed. Mariani, p. 371): "Dico hic quod metaphisica hoc idem est quod metas physice transcendens, et sic duplex est metaphisica: quaedam est metaphisica communis que procedit ex principiis communibus entis (…); quedam est metaphisica particularis que considerat de ente separato secundum rem".

[211] Francis of Marchia, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, prooem. (ed. Friedman, p. 512): "Sed metaphysica communis praecedit ordine doctrinae omnes scientias particulares. Metaphysica autem particularis sequitur ordine doctrinae omnes scientias particulars"; *ibid.* (p. 513): "Post politicam vero, per quam homo disponitur ad intelligendum entia simpliciter separata, sequitur quaedam metaphysica specialis, quae est de entibus separatis (…). Et ista est finis omnium scientiarum humanorum, ad quam omnes scientiae humanae ordinantur".

a new stand in the debate on the proper subject of this discipline that determines its unity—is this subject being in general or God? Marchia cuts the Gordian knot of the onto-theological structure of First Philosophy by accepting two metaphysics that are distinct from one another because of their different subjects. He presents a number of reasons for the necessity of a particular metaphysics of the divine as a science distinct from a general metaphysics. Most of them are analogy arguments: just as there is, besides the general science of being, a science that considers material being, namely physics, there must likewise be, besides the general science, a particular science of immaterial being.[212]

Historically, Marchia's view of a *duplex metaphysica* is a continuation of a Scotist discussion and the anticipation of the modern position. In his *Metaphysics* commentary, Duns Scotus raises and rejects a *dubium* which assumes that metaphysics has to be split up into two sciences, a *metaphysica transcendens* and a special science dealing with the divine, with the result that there will be four theoretical sciences, transcendental metaphysics and three special sciences (theology, mathematics and physics) (see ch. 9.1.2).[213] Francis's claim seems to anticipate the process of splitting up metaphysics into a general metaphysics and a particular metaphysics of the divine in the German School philosophy of the seventeenth century. The end point of this development was the identification of *prima philosophia* with *ontologia* and its separation of metaphysics in Christian Wolff (1679–1754).[214] Yet Marchia's conception is different from both Scotus's and the early modern position.

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[212] *Ibid.*, I, q. 1 (ed. A. Zimmermann, pp. 89–90): "Quod autem praeter metaphysicam communem, quae est de ente in communi, sit dare particularem, quae est de ente separato, patet: (…) Tunc sic: Quando aliquid est de se essentialiter indifferens ad ens abstractum et ens non abstractum, ens non abstractum non plus spectat ad scientiam quam ens abstractum. Sed ens non abstractum habet propriam scientiam praeter scientiam entis. Ergo similiter ens abstractum habet propriam scientiam praeter scientiam entis".

[213] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, I, q. 1, n. 155 (ed. Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera philosophica*, Vol. III, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997, p. 69): "Igitur metaphysica transcendens erit tota prior scientia divina, et ita erunt quattuor scientiae speculativae: una transcendens, et tres specials".

[214] Cf. E. Rompe, *Die Trennung von Ontologie und Metaphysik. Der Ablösungsprozeß und seine Motivierung bei Benedictus Pererius und anderen Denkern des 16. und 17.* Jahrhunderts, Bonn 1968 [Doctoral Thesis]. E. Vollrath, "Die Gliederung der Metaphysik in eine Metaphysica generalis und eine Metaphysica specialis", in: *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 16 (1962), pp. 258–283.

A clear difference to the modern understanding is that in Francis the two metaphysics are not completely separated. The science of immaterial being (or theology), he argues, is "mixed" (*admiscetur*) with the science of being for epistemological reasons. The fact is, immaterial being can be naturally known by our intellect, not through a concept proper to it, but *per conceptus transcendentes*, through the transcendental concepts of "being" and its disjunctive properties, such as "finite" and "infinite".[215] Hence, particular metaphysics takes its subject, God, from general metaphysics, since the latter science proves the existence of this subject.[216]

The same argument Francis uses in order to explain the "*mixing*" of the two metaphysics was employed by Scotus in order to defend the structural *unity* of metaphysics and to reject its division into a transcendental science and a special science. The study of the divine cannot be separated from transcendental metaphysics, since "all things naturally knowable of God will be transcendentals".[217] Marchia endorses the view that the divine is not immediately accessible to the human mind, but only through the transcendental knowledge of being. Nevertheless general and particular metaphysics are and remain *per se* two distinct sciences for him. The argument from the theory of science for the separation is apparently weightier than epistemological reasons against it.

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[215] Francis of Marchia, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, VI, q. 16 (ed. A. Zimmermann, p. 99): "ens separatum non cognoscitur a nobis naturaliter nisi per conceptus transcendentes entis, unius, multi, actus et potentiae, simplicis et compositi, finiti et infiniti, non autem per propriam rationem. Ideo scientia, quae est de ente separato, accipit principia sua a scientia, quae est de ente. Propter quod probare ens separatum esse pertinet ad scientiam de ente, quia ens separatum non probatur nisi per conceptus transcendentes, secundum Avicennam in I^0 Metaphysicae. Ergo scientia de ente separato admiscetur quodam modo cum scientia de ente".

[216] *Ibid.*, I, q. 1 (p. 89): "Illa metaphysica particularis accipit suum subiectum a metaphysica communi, et haec metaphysica probat primum subiectum metaphysicae particularis. Et ideo metaphysica particularis subalternatur metaphysicae communis".

[217] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, I, q. 1, n. 161 (ed. Franciscan Institute, Vol. III, p. 71).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRANSCENDENTALS IN NOMINALISM

11.1 William of Ockham: A semantic account

11.1.1 *Is there a doctrine of the transcendentals in Ockham?*

The medieval doctrine of the transcendentals is closely connected with a metaphysical conception of reality, but is there a science of being in William of Ockham (ca. 1285–1347)? In some studies it has been suggested that his "nominalism" meant the beginning of the end of metaphysics. Pierre Alféri, for instance, has argued that this science in fact became a "phantom" for Ockham in two respects. First, metaphysics is a phantom in the corpus of his writings: he wrote commentaries on several Aristotelian works, but not on the *Metaphysics*. Ockham was one of the few prominent medieval authors who did not comment upon this fundamental text. Secondly, it is the practice of his thought in particular that makes the metaphysical project of a universal science of being as being a phantom. The consideration of transcendental "being" is absorbed by the science of logic that explains the predication of the term *ens*, together with the particular sciences that deal with the singular beings to which the term refers.[1]

Neither argument is, however, conclusive. The absence of a *Metaphysics* commentary is not evidence for an antimetaphysical tendency. Ockham himself holds out the possibility of such a commentary;[2] the reason that he did not realize this intention was not necessarily a lack of interest. Moreover, in several places of his work, Ockham observes that the examination of a problem he is discussing is really part of the

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[1] P. Alféri, *Guillaume d'Ockham. Le singulier*, Paris 1989, in particular pp. 454–462: "La métaphysique, un fantôme".

[2] William of Ockham, *Expositio in libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, prol., § 4 (ed. The Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera Philosophica* [= OP], Vol. IV, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1985, p. 14): "Tamen qualiter hoc sit intelligendum, magis forte super *Metaphysicam* ostendetur".

tasks of First Philosophy. He states, for example, that the question as to the ontological status of concepts and second intentions does not pertain *ad logicam* but *ad metaphysicam*. When commenting on Porphyry's famous statement on the equivocity of being, Ockham remarks that it would be false to deny a univocal concept common to the first being and the other beings. "It pertains, however, to a higher *artifex* [namely the metaphysician] to speak of this".[3] The fact is Ockham does have a metaphysics and never denies its possibility.[4]

What conception does he have of this science? His ontology has mostly been studied with respect to two issues, the problem of the universals and the doctrine of the categories.[5] Both themes are typical of the "nominalist" tendency in Ockham's metaphysics. His solution to the problem of the universals reflects his criticism of conceptual realism—there is no universality in things. His analysis of the categories, which are *realiter* reduced to two "absolute" categories, namely, substance and quality, reflects his program of "ontological reduction".

In view of this tendency one could wonder whether there is a doctrine of the transcendentals in Ockham. The marginal attention paid to this topic in most studies creates the impression that the account of

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[3] William of Ockham, *Expositionis in Libros Artis Logicae*, prooem. (OP II, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1978, p. 7): "Verumtamen qualia sunt ista fabricata, scilicet conceptus et intentiones (…), an scilicet sint realiter et subiective in anima existentes, an aliquo alio modo, non ad logicam sed ad metaphysicam pertinet". Cf. *Expositio in librum Porphyrii de Praedicabilibus*, c. 2, § 10 (OP II, p. 44).

[4] Cf. Ph. Boehner, "The Metaphysics of William Ockham", in: *The Review of Metaphysics* 1 (1947–1948), pp. 59–86 [reprinted in his *Collected Articles on Ockham*, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1958 (Franciscan Institute Publications. Philosophy Series, 12), pp. 375–399]. J. P. Beckmann, "Das Subjekt-Prädikat-Schema und die Frage nach der Möglichkeit von Metaphysik bei Wilhelm von Ockham", in: *Franziskanische Studien* 59 (1977), pp. 1–14. L. M. de Rijk, "War Ockham ein Antimetaphysiker? Eine semantische Betrachtung", in: J. P. Beckmann / L. Honnefelder / G. Schrimpf / G. Wieland (eds.), *Philosophie im Mittelalter. Entwicklungslinien und Paradigmen*, Hamburg 1986, pp. 313–328. D. Perler, "Kopulatheorie und Seinsbegriff. Zum Verhältnis von Logik und Metaphysik bei Wilhelm von Ockham", in: B. Mojsisch / O. Pluta (eds.), *Historia Philosophiae Medii Aevi. Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters (Festschrift für Kurt Flash zu seinem 60. Geburtstag),* Vol. 2, Amsterdam-Philadelphia 1991, pp. 805–829. L. Honnefelder, "Wilhelm von Ockham. Die Möglichkeit der Metaphysik", in: Th. Kobusch (ed.), *Philosophen des Mittelalters. Eine Einführung*, Darmstadt 2000, pp. 250–268.

[5] An example is M. McCord Adams, *William Ockham*, 2 vols., Notra Dame, Ind., 1987 (Publications in Medieval Studies. The Medieval Institute University of Notre Dame, 26), Part I: Ontology (pp. 3–313). Cf. P. V. Spade, "Ockham's Nominalist Metaphysics: Some Main Themes", in: id. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, Cambridge 1999, pp. 100–118.

the *communissima* does not play a role in Ockham's conception. His view of truth seems to confirm this impression: truth is a property of a proposition, not of being. In his main work, the *Summa logicae*, he states that "truth and falsity are not things really different from a true or false proposition".[6] Yet just in the *Summa logicae*, we find a series of somewhat neglected texts showing that there is a doctrine of the transcendentals in Ockham.[7]

The logic of terms in the Summa logicae

1. Part I of the *Summa logicae*, which was composed in ca. 1323, is devoted to terms. After the presentation of several divisions of terms (c. 1–13), Ockham first treats terms of the second intention (c. 14–37). In this section he discusses the problem of the universals and the five predicables. In chapter 38, he begins his account of terms of the first intention as follows:

> Having dealt with terms of the second intention and terms of the second imposition we must consider terms of the first intention, to which the categories belong. But first we shall speak about some terms that are common to all things, regardless of whether these are things, which are not signs, or things, which are signs. 'Being' and 'one' are terms of this sort.[8]

Chapter 38 deals with the term "being" (*ens*), which is called *transcendens*, and chapter 39 with "one", which is said to be a property of being (*passio entis*). Ch. 40 continues with "what is lower to 'being'" (*de inferioribus ad 'ens'*), namely the ten predicaments. Before his analysis of the categories, Ockham thus introduces the transcendentals as a distinct group of terms. They are marked by commonness (*communia*

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[6] William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, I, c. 43 (OP I, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1974, p. 131). Cf. D. Perler, *Der propositionale Wahrheitsbegriff im 14. Jahrhundert*, Berlin-New York 1992 (Quellen und Studien zur Philosophie, 33).

[7] See the two studies of D. Perler, "Ockhams Transformation der Transzendentalien", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, Berlin-New York 2003 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 30), pp. 361–382; and "Eine sprachphilosophische Wende im Spätmittelalter? Zu den Wahrheitsdiskussionen bei Thomas von Aquin und Wilhelm von Ockham", in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 71 (2004), pp. 280–304.

[8] William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, I, c. 38 (OP I, p. 106): "Dicto de terminis quibusdam secundae intentionis et quibusdam secundae impositionis, videndum est de terminis primae intentionis, cuiusmodi ponuntur praedicamenta. Primo tamen dicendum est de quibusdam communibus omnibus, sive sint res, quae non sunt signa, sive sint signa, cuiusmodi sunt 'ens'et 'unum'".

omnibus), to which it is added that they signify both things that are not signs and things that are signs. What is meant by this?

2. It is important to see that the added characteristic of commonness goes back to an earlier chapter in the *Summa logicae* (c. 11), in which Ockham explains the distinction between terms of the second and of the first intention and in which the transcendentals were already mentioned. Whereas terms of the second intention signify intentions of the soul which are natural signs, and not artificial (f. i. "universal", "predicate"),

> terms of the first intention (…) signify things which are not signs and are not derived from such signs, as 'man', 'animal', 'Socrates', 'Plato', 'whiteness', 'white', 'being', 'true', 'good', etc. Some of these terms precisely signify things, which are not signs able to stand for other things, but some terms signify such signs and also other things.[9]

As examples of terms of the first intention Ockham adduces both categorial ('man', 'white') and transcendental terms ('*ens*', '*unum*', '*bonum*'). But at the same time it is striking that he introduces a distinction within the group of terms of the first intention, which somewhat relativizes the opposition to terms of the second intention: some of these terms only signify things; others signify things as well as signs. He does not say to what subclass the terms mentioned are related, but in the summary at the end of chapter 11 the specification is given: some terms of the first intention indifferently signify things, which are not parts of a proposition, and also signs. Terms of this sort are 'thing' (*res*), 'being', and 'something' (*aliquid*).[10]

In the *Summa logicae* I, c. 11, Ockham establishes what he assumes in chapter 38: transcendentals are a distinct group of terms of the first intention. He interprets their traditional mark of commonness in a semantic sense; they can signify signs as well what is not a sign. Ock-

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[9] *Ibid.*, c. 11 (p. 40): "Nomina autem primae intentionis (…) significant aliquas res, quae non sunt signa, nec consequentia talia signa, cuiusmodi sunt omnia talia 'homo', 'animal', 'Sortes', 'Plato', 'albedo', 'album', 'ens', 'verum', 'bonum' et huiusmodi, quorum aliqua significant praecise res quae non sunt signa nata supponere pro aliis, aliqua significant talia signa et simul cum hoc alias res".

[10] *Ibid.* (p. 41): "Quaedam vero significant praecise res, quae non sunt signa talia, quae sunt partes propositionis; quaedam indifferenter significant tales res quae non sunt partes propositionis nec orationis et etiam signa talia, cuiusmodi sunt talia nomina 'res', 'ens', 'aliquid' et huiusmodi". Cf. E. A. Moody, *The Logic of William of Ockham*, New York 1935, pp. 44–46.

ham does not exemplify this feature, but an instance could be the term 'true' (*verum*), which can signify a proposition but also the intelligibility of a thing. It is remarkable that transcendental terms, although they do signify things and signs, are nevertheless considered to be terms of the first intention. But Ockham does not elaborate this special feature of transcendentals.

3. Fundamental to Ockham's thought is a distinction he introduces in *Summa logicae* I, c. 10, i.e. the distinction between absolute and connotative terms. Absolute terms do not signify one thing primarily and another secondarily. "Rather everything signified by an absolute name is signified equally primarily (*aeque primo*)"; the term 'animal', for instance, signifies cows, asses and men equally primarily. Connotative terms, by contrast, have a twofold signification, they signify one thing primarily and another secondarily; such terms have a nominal definition, in which what is signified directly (*in recto*) is in the nominative case and what is connoted is *in obliquo* (in an oblique case).[11]

The doctrinal importance of the distinction between absolute and connotative terms becomes evident when Ockham, in the continuation of *Summa logicae* I, c. 10, applies the distinction to the Aristotelian categories. Only two of them, the categories of substance and quality, are "absolute" categories, signifying a distinct singular reality. The eight other categories have to be understood as connotative terms: "Those who claim [as Ockham himself does] that every thing is either a substance or a quality must hold that all what is contained in the categories other than substance and quality are connotative terms".[12] The other categories do not signify a reality distinct from substance or quality, but primarily signify the singular things signified by the absolute categories and add a different connotation.

Another group of connotative terms Ockham lists in *Summa logicae* I, c. 10 are the transcendental terms 'true', 'good', and 'one'. These

[11] William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, I, c. 10 (pp. 35–37). For the importance of the theory of connotation for Ockham's nominalism, cf. C. Panaccio, *Les mots, les concepts et les choses. La sémantique de Guillaume d'Occam et le nominalisme d'aujourd'hui*, Montréal-Paris 1991 (Analytiques, 3).

[12] William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, I, c. 10 (OP I, pp. 37–38). Cf. Th. Kobusch, "Substanz und Qualität. Die Reduzierung der Kategorien nach Wilhelm von Ockham", in: D. Koch / K. Bort (eds.), *Kategorie und Kategorialität. Historisch-systematische Untersuchungen zum Begriff der Kategorie im philosophischen Denken (Festschrift für Klaus Hartmann zum 65. Geburtstag)*, Würzburg 1990, pp. 75–98.

terms, which are convertible with 'being', primarily signify "being" but connote something different from it. "True", for instance, signifies "all beings in the world, just as 'being' does, and connotes the act of understanding". This is apparent from the nominal definition of "true": "that which can be understood by the intellect". The first part ("that which can be understood") is put *in recto* and is thus what is primarily signified; "the intellect" is put *in obliquo*, in the ablative case, and is what is connoted.[13]

From our analysis of the logic of terms in the *Summa logicae* we may conclude that Ockham considers the transcendentals a distinct group of terms of the first intention, some of which are interpreted as connotative terms.

"Transcendental categories" in Ockham? The interpretation of Gottfried Martin

One of the rare studies on the function of transcendental concepts in Ockham is a comprehensive German study by Gottfried Martin, published in 1949.[14] The book, which has been virtually ignored in the Anglo-American world, wishes to show that Ockham is an important link in the tradition of transcendental philosophy that started with Aristotle's account of being and one in book IV of the *Metaphysics* and came to completion in Kant's thought. According to Martin, Ockham's contribution is of a quantitative nature and consists in an extension of the transcendental domain. While denying that the categories

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[13] William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, I, c. 10 (OP I, p. 38): "Sub istis etiam nominibus comprehenduntur omnia talia 'verum', 'bonum', 'unum' (…). Et eodem modo dicendum est de 'vero' et 'bono', quia 'verum', quod ponitur convertibile cum 'ente', significat idem quod 'intelligibile'. 'Bonum' etiam, quod est convertibile cum 'ente', significat idem quod haec oratio 'aliquid secundum rectam rationem volibile vel diligibile'". Cf. *Quaestiones in librum tertium Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, q. 4 (ed. The Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera Theologica* [= OT], Vol. VI, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1982, p. 145): "(…) 'verum' significat omnia entia de mundo sicut facit 'ens', et connotat actum intelligendi". *Ibid*. (p. 146): "Exemplum: accipiamus definitionem exprimentem quid nominis 'veri' quae est ista: 'verum est illud reale, quidquid sit, quod potest intelligi ab intellectu', et 'bonum est illud quod potest concupisci a voluntate'. Haec pars 'res aliqua quae potest intelligi' ponitur in recto, et intellectus et voluntas in obliquo. Et ideo intellectus et voluntas sunt connotata. Unde illud dicitur connotatum, quod est totaliter extrinsecum alicui significato principali conceptus vel vocis".

[14] G. Martin, *Wilhelm von Ockham. Untersuchungen zur Ontologie der Ordnungen*, Berlin 1949. Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Ockham, ein Transzendentalphilosoph? Eine kritische Diskussion mit G. Martin", in: E. P. Bos / H. A. Krop (eds.), *Ockham and Ockhamists*, Nijmegen 1987 (Artistarium. Supplementa, 4), pp. 3–13.

other than substance and quality signify an "absolute" being, Ockham interprets their ontological status as "transcendental being" and understands these "transcendental categories" as general conditions of the thing as thing, not as classes of things. According to Martin, the medieval opposition between "transcendental" and "categorial" loses its relevance in Ockham. Consequently, a special doctrine of the transcendental properties of being is no longer necessary for Ockham and was dropped by him.

The outcome of Martin's study is that Ockham has started "the transformation of the doctrine of the categories into transcendental philosophy", that is, into a theory of the general conditions of a thing. In this way he prepared the Kantian re-interpretation of the categories as the transcendental a priori concepts of the intellect.[15] The Kantian perspective was the point of departure of Martin's book; as he states in the first Preface, his study on Ockham originated from an inquiry into the historical presuppositions of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.

The two main claims of Martin's reading of Ockham are, however, highly questionable. First, our analysis (in the preceding section) of the logic of terms in the *Summa logicae*, has shown the incorrectness of the contention that Ockham dropped a doctrine of the traditional transcendentals "being", "one", "true" and "good". It is not correct either to maintain that Ockham understands the categories apart from substance and quality as "transcendental being"—Martin's key notion of "transcendental categories" is not to be found in Ockham's work.

It is true that there is a similarity between some categories and some transcendentals, insofar as they both are seen as connotative terms by Ockham and thus signify something primarily and something else secondarily. But there remains a fundamental difference between the categories and the transcendentals with respect to their primary significates. What is primarily signified by the connotative categories is an absolute category—substance or quality—, what is primarily signified by the connotative transcendentals is "being", with which they are convertible.

The distinction between the categorial and the transcendental order remains preserved in Ockham's thought, as the structure of his *Summa logicae* reveals. Martin's reading turns the similarity between the two

[15] G. Martin, *Wilhelm von Ockham. Untersuchungen zur Ontologie der Ordnungen*, pp. 243–255, in particular p. 252.

orders into an identity in what is primarily signified by the connotative categories and the connotative transcendentals. Therefore, he can claim that Ockham understands some categories as "transcendental being". What Ockham, however, actually says is that they are "connotative"—a concept that is more comprehensive than "transcendental" because it includes categorial and transcendental terms.

11.1.2 *Transcendental being*

"Being" (*ens*) is the first transcendental. In the *Summa logicae*, Ockham discusses its feature of common predicability. But in other texts, he also deals with the metaphysical issues that were traditionally related to this transcendental, the question as to the adequate object of the intellect and the question of the proper subject of metaphysics.

Common predicability: Univocity, equivocity and analogy

1. In *Summa logicae* I, c. 38, Ockham argues that the term "being" can be taken in two senses. It can be first understood in a univocal sense, as a concept that is common to all things and can be predicated *in quid* of all things, in the manner in which a transcendental (*transcendens*) can be predicated quidditatively.[16] The additional remark is meant to emphasize that the quidditative predication of a transcendental term is different from that of a genus.

Ockham advances an argument for the claim that there is a concept common to and predicable of all things. It is a modified version of Duns Scotus's first argument for the univocity of being "from a certain and doubtful concept". Ockham reformulates Scotus's argument in order to prevent that the certainty achieved consists in the disjunction of the two doubtful concepts (while it is doubtful whether something is A or is B, it is certain that it is either A or B). Moreover, for Ockham the argument is not a strict demonstration, but "persuasive". It can be summarized as follows:

[16] William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, I, c. 38 (OP I, p. 106): "ens dupliciter accipi potest. Uno modo accipitur hoc nomen 'ens' secundum quod sibi correspondet unus conceptus communis omnibus rebus, praedicabilis de omnibus in quid, illo modo quo transcendens potest in quid praedicari".

> Supposing that there are distinct common concepts A ("man") and B ("animal") that can be predicated of a given subject C ("Socrates"), three propositions can be formed: "C is B", "C is A", and "C is something (*aliquid* or *ens*)". If Socrates is seen at a distance, the first two propositions can be doubted, while the third one ("C is something") is known with certainty. Consequently, "something" is a predicate distinct from the predicates A and B, and more common than them, for it can be truly predicated of every being.[17]

The argument is typical of Ockham's understanding of transcendentality: it is possible to surpass two distinct concepts and to form a "transcendental" concept predicable of all things. This concept is equated with "something" (*aliquid*), which apparently is synonymous with "being" (*ens*).

2. But "being" can also be taken in another sense; Ockham goes on to say in *Summa logicae* I, c. 38, that the term is equivocal, as it is not in accordance with one concept that 'being' is predicated of all its possible subjects taken in their significative function. Instead, diverse concepts correspond to the term 'being'. Ockham does not explain this assertion, but refers to his account in his commentary on Porphyry's "Introduction" or *De praedicabilibus*.[18] But how can the transcendental term 'being' be both univocal and equivocal? Porphyry's claim of the "equivocity of being", which, as we have seen, dominated the ontological discourse in the Boethian era, appeared to be a position incompatible with the presuppositions of the transcendental way of thought.

In his commentary, Ockham gives a justification of Porphyry's claim, which is not sought in the ontological inequality of the Aristotelian categories. The reason for the equivocity of being is that the categories are predicables, which do not always import things that are absolutely distinct. Some categories, that of substance and that of quality, signify the things for which they stand distinctly (*divisim*); a thing taken in itself receives the predication of the category of substance or quality. The other categories signify the things for which they stand conjunctively (*coniunctim*); many things considered together receive

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[17] *Ibid.* (pp. 106–107). The examples of "man", "animal", and "Socrates" for A, B and C, and of "being" for the most common concept are given in *Quodlibet* V, q. 14 (OT IX, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1980, pp. 536–537).

[18] William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, I, c. 38 (OP I, p. 107): "Tamen non obstante quod sic sit unus conceptus communis omni enti, tamen hoc nomen 'ens' est aequivocum, quia non praedicatur de omnibus subicibilibus, quando significative sumuntur, secundum unum conceptum, sed sibi diversi conceptus correspondent, sicut super *Porphyrium* declaravi".

the predication of such a category. Ockham gives the example of the relation of similarity: we cannot say "this white thing is a similarity" or "that white thing is a similarity", but we can say "these two white things are a similarity". That of which the category of substance is predicated is said to be an *ens*, that of which relation is predicated is a plurality of *entia*. Therefore, "being" is predicated equivocally of the ten categories.[19]

Ockham adds an important qualification to this conclusion. Although Porphyry's claim that "being" is not univocally predicated of the categories is true, it is not true what some simultaneously maintain, namely, that there cannot be a concept common to beings of diverse categories or to the first being and created beings. The reason for the necessity of such a common concept is that otherwise natural knowledge of the first being would be impossible. It does, however, pertain, Ockham observes, to an *artifex superior* (than to the logician) to speak of this.[20]

3. Ockham deals at length with the question of whether "being" (*ens*) is univocal to God and creatures in his *Ordinatio*.[21] As a continuation of his discussion on the universals, he raises the question (I, d. 2, q. 9) "Whether any universal is univocal to God and creature?" (*Utrum aliquod universale sit univocum Deo et creaturae*). Ockham deliberately phrases the question in terms of a "univocal universal", not, as Duns Scotus does, in terms of a "univocal concept". It is meaningless, Ockham states, to ask whether "being" is a concept univocal to God and creature, for "univocity" properly understood is a word (*vox*). It is,

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[19] William of Ockham, *Expositio in librum Porphyrii de Praedicabilibus*, c. 2, § 10 (OP II, pp. 43–44).

[20] *Ibid.* (p. 42): "Quamvis verum sit quod 'ens' non dicitur univoce de decem praedicamentis, sicut auctor hic dicit, tamen quod simul cum hoc dicunt, quod nullis entibus diversorum praedicamentorum potest esse aliquis conceptus communis, nec etiam primo enti et aliis entibus, non reputo verum; cuius ratio est, ad praesens, quia cum primum ens (…) oportet quod cognoscatur in conceptu communi sibi et aliis (…). De hoc tamen dicere pertinet ad artificem superiorem".

[21] William of Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum (Ordinatio)*, d. 2, q. 9 (OT II, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1970, pp. 292–336). Another main text is *Reportatio*, III, q. 10 (OT VI, pp. 335–345). Cf. M. C. Menges, *The Concept of Univocity regarding the Predication of God and Creature according to William Ockham*, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. – Louvain 1952 (Franciscan Institute Publications. Philosophy Series, 9). A. Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham in the Light of Its Principles*, Toronto 1999 (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies. Studies and Texts, 133), pp. 277–292.

in Aristotle's *Categories*, distinguished from "equivocal" and "denominative", and equivocity applies to words, not to concepts. We should therefore ask instead whether there is one concept predicable *in quid* of God and creature. Having made this precision, however, Ockham concedes that the name 'univocal' can be applied improperly (*improprie*) to concepts.[22]

Ockham's reply to the question agrees with Scotus in the main conclusion that there are univocal concepts that apply to God and creatures. However, he thinks that Scotus's account fails in two respects. Some of Scotus's arguments in support of the univocity are inconclusive. Further, his contention that "being" is not univocally common to all what exists, as it does not extend to the ultimate differences and the properties of being, is false.[23]

According to Ockham "there is one argument for univocity in virtue of which all other arguments (of Scotus) could be accepted". It is based on the existence of a natural knowledge of God: "All agree that we have some non-complex knowledge about God in this life". The argument is actually an explanation of this fact. We cannot know God in himself (*in se*) in this life or in a simple concept proper to him. We must thus know God in something else, in a concept that is common to him and other things and that is predicated quidditatively. From this it follows that there is a univocal concept to God and others.[24]

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[22] William of Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 2, q. 9, a. 1 (OT II, pp. 306–307): "Circa primum [*sc.* quid sit univocum] dico quod 'univocum' proprie accipitur pro voce univoca, quia accipitur secundum quod distinguitur contra aequivocum vel denominativum. Et isto modo nihil est quaerere an ens dicat conceptum univocum Deo et creaturae, sed debet quaeri an sit aliquis unus conceptus praedicabilis in quid de Deo et creaturis. Et ita, extendendo nomen univoci, potest improprie dici quod aliquis conceptus est univocus".

[23] *Ibid.* [Defectus opinionis Scoti] (p. 298): "Quamvis ista opinio quantum ad conclusionem principalem quam tenet sit vera, videtur tamen in duobus deficere. Primo, quia illae rationes illo modo quo nunc fiunt non videntur concludere, saltem aliquae. Secundo, est falsum quod dicit quod ens aliquibus est commune univocum et non omnibus existentibus a parte rei". For Ockham's criticisms concerning the first point, cf. also *ibid.* pp. 298–306, and concerning Scotus's interpretation of the properties of being, pp. 321–322.

[24] William of Ockham, *Reportatio*, III, q. 10 (OT VI, pp. 340–341), in particular: "Pro univocatione nescio nisi tantum unam rationem in cuius virtute omnes aliae rationes tenent. Et est ista: omnes concedunt quod aliquam notitiam incomplexam habemus de Deo pro statu isto". Cf. *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, q. 9, a. 3 (OT II, pp. 312–317).

4. Ockham raises a "difficulty" regarding the idea of univocity. With respect to God and creatures "there seems to be an analogical predication", distinct from an equivocal or univocal predication. This type of predication has been proposed by a long commentary tradition, which read Aristotle's statements on the science of metaphysics and the concept of being (in book IV of the *Metaphysics*) in the sense that "being is neither said equivocally nor univocally but in an intermediate way".[25]

Ockham's reply is rather surprising. He responds to the suggestion of an analogical predication by distinguishing three forms of univocity according to the various degrees of similarity (*similitudo*) in things to which the common concept refers:

(a) In a first sense, "univocal" denotes a concept common to things which have a perfect likeness in all essentials without any dissimilarity. Taken in this sense, only the concept of the *species specialissima* is univocal, since in individuals of the same species nothing of a different *ratio* is to be found.
(b) In a second sense, "univocal" denotes a concept common to things which are neither altogether similar nor altogether dissimilar, but in some respects similar and in others dissimilar. In this manner, man and donkey agree in the concept of "animal" as a univocal concept. Taken in this sense, the concept of a genus, which does not completely exclude an equivocation, is univocal.
(c) In a third sense, "univocal" denotes a concept common to things which have no similarity, either substantial or accidental. In this manner, every concept which applies to God and creatures is univocal to them, for in God and in the creature there is nothing at all that is of the same *ratio*.[26]

Ockham argues that the *sancti* denied the first and the second sense of univocation with respect to God and creature because nothing essential or accidental in them is of the same *ratio*. However, the third sense of univocity, the weakest form, was admitted by the *sancti* as well by the *philosophi*. Ockham maintains that a univocal concept of

[25] William of Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 2, q. 9 (OT II, pp. 322–23). *Reportatio*, III, q. 10 (OT VI, p. 326).
[26] William of Ockham, *Reportatio*, III, q. 10 (OT VI, pp. 335–337). Cf. *Ordinatio*, I, d. 2, q. 9 (OT II, pp. 310–311).

this kind, which is neither purely equivocal (for it is one concept and not many) nor purely univocal, is identical with "analogy". For that reason, "analogy" is said to be midway between pure univocation and pure equivocation.[27]

Ockham's account is not unproblematic. His description of the third kind of univocation remains purely negative: it is concerned with things having no similarity, either substantial or accidental, with each other. One wonders whether there is a positive reason for the attribution of a univocal concept to God and creatures.

A possible answer could be provided by the order in which Ockham presents the different forms of univocation. The first kind of a univocal concept is related to the likeness of things in a *species specialissima*, the second kind to the likeness of things in a *genus*. Ockham does not specify the third kind, but it must be related to a *conceptus transcendens*, for he acknowledges that beyond the categorical species and genera there are univocal transcendental concepts, predicable of God and creatures.[28] Such a univocal concept, like "being", has a content, minimal though it is, signifying "something" (as in *Summa logicae* I, c. 38) or "every positive nature" (*Reportatio* III, q. 10).

It is striking that Ockham, in his discussion of the common predicability of "being", integrates the three types of predication that were advanced as alternatives in the medieval debate on the conceptual unity of "being": equivocity, analogy and univocity. He follows Duns Scotus's turn to univocity at the transcendental level, but at the same time gives both a justification of Porphyry's claim of the equivocity of being and a place to analogical predication. The "medieval invention of analogy" was developed from a class of equivocity, but it becomes in Ockham a (weak) form of univocity.

Being: The first and adequate object of the intellect?

After having dealt with the problem of the universals and of the *universale univocum* in *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, Ockham raises in d. 3 the question as to the first object of the intellect. The conceptual framework of this discussion is not different from that found in Scotists, for

[27] William of Ockham, *Reportatio*, III, q. 10 (OT VI, pp. 337–339).

[28] Ockham uses the phrase *conceptus transcendens* that is common to God and creatures in *Quodlibet* VII, q. 13 (OT IX, p. 750).

Ockham adopts the distinctions the Subtle Doctor had introduced into the medieval debate, so that his discussion seems to be part of the early Scotus reception. In q. 1 ("Whether that which is first known by our intellect is the divine essence?"), Ockham's reply starts with Scotus's threefold distinction of a first object according to the different orders of intellectual knowledge: the first object in the order of generation (or "that which terminates the first act of understanding"), the first object in the order of adequation (or "that which is predicated of all *per se* intelligibles"), and the first object in the order of perfection (or "the most perfect intelligible").[29] When he examines the first object in the order of generation, he adopts Scotus's distinctions between "confused" and "distinct" knowledge, and that between "confused knowledge" and "knowledge of the confused".[30] But Ockham's doctrinal position is quite different from Scotus's views.

1. The turn becomes manifest in his analysis of the first object in the order of generation. Ockham's main thesis is that what is first known by us is not the most common (*communissimum*) but the singular (*singulare*). He advances a number of arguments for this claim, of which the first, based on the relation between a potency and its object, illustrates the changed perspective. Ockham argues that the aspect (*ratio*) under which the first object is known by a potency precedes the act of that potency, for no potency makes its first object and the *ratio obiectiva*. But only the singular under the aspect of singular precedes the act of a potency.[31] The "objective" priority of the singular contains an ontological presupposition—only the singular has extramental being—and a cognitive presupposition—the singular as singular can be known by the intellect.

The latter presupposition was problematic within the context of an Aristotelian theory of knowledge. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, denies that the human intellect can know a singular as singular directly and primarily. Without mentioning his name, Ockham cites Aquinas's answer to the objection that the intellect is able to know the singular, since a superior power can do whatever is done by an inferior power and sense knows the singular. In his reply, Aquinas holds that the

[29] William of Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, q. 1 (OT II, pp. 388–389).
[30] *Ibid.*, q. 5 (pp. 471–472).
[31] *Ibid.* (p. 473).

higher power can do what the lower power can, but "in a more eminent way". And so, what the sense knows materially and concretely, which is to know the singular directly, the intellect knows immaterially and in the abstract, which is to know the universal.[32] Ockham rejects Aquinas's evaluation of the relation between the singular and the universal. If the object of the intellect were the universal, the higher power would not know the object of sense in a more eminent way, because "the universal is absolutely more imperfect and posterior to the singular".[33]

Ockham concludes that the distinct knowledge of the singular does not necessarily require the knowledge of being.[34] Against this conclusion a traditional argument for the cognitive priority of transcendental being is adduced; according to this argument, based on the reduction of our concepts to a first concept, it is impossible to understand "man" without understanding "animal" and ultimately the most common concept of "being". Ockham's reaction consists in a semantic distinction. The objection is true, if the terms 'man', 'animal' and 'being' have personal supposition, that is, stand for the concrete thing they signify. If, however, they have simple supposition, that is, stand for their concepts, the argument is false. Ockham's reply makes use of his theory of supposition, which, as we shall see (11.1.3), is also a characteristic element in his account of the identity and difference between transcendental terms.

2. After having determined the first object in the order of generation, Ockham raises the question: "Whether common being (*ens commune*) is the first and adequate object of our intellect?"[35] His main target is Duns Scotus, who had answered the question affirmatively. Ockham argues differently: a necessary requisite of the adequate object of the intellect is that it is *per se* predicated of all that is intelligible. "Being" does not meet this condition, for beings of reason and second

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[32] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 86, a. 1 and ad 4.

[33] William of Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, q. 6 (OT II, p. 495): "Contra: quando cognitum a potentia superiori est simpliciter imperfectius cognito a potentia inferiori, tunc superior potentia non cognoscit modo eminentiori illud quod cognoscitur a potentia inferiori; sed universale est simpliciter imperfectius et posterius ipso singulari; igitur intellectus non cognoscit obiectum sensus modo eminentiori".

[34] *Ibid.*, q. 7 (OT II, p. 521): "Utrum singulare possit distincte cognosci ante cognitionem entis vel cuiuscumque universalis".

[35] *Ibid.*, q. 8 (pp. 524–542).

intentions are of themselves (*per se*) intelligible, yet "being" cannot be univocally predicated of them, since there is nothing univocally common to real being and being of reason.[36] The univocity of being is restricted to the domain of *real* being; it is common to substance and accident, to God and creatures.

Hence Ockham's own position is that there is no adequate object of the intellect, since no object is common to all that is *per se* intelligible. Yet in a later addition to this text, he restricts his conclusion—a restriction that reflects Ockham's uncertainty about the ontological status of mental concepts. The denial of an adequate object of the intellect holds *recitative*, that is, by "reciting" the opinion that mental concepts have only "objective being"—the theory that Ockham maintains in his early works. But according to another opinion concepts have "subjective being" as real qualities existing in the soul—Ockham's view in his later works. If the latter opinion is accepted, one must say that "being" is the adequate object of the intellect, because it is then univocally common to all that is *per se* intelligible, including second intentions and beings of reason.[37]

Ockham draws a second conclusion, which complements his first (unrestricted) conclusion: the most common (*communissimum*) that can be apprehended by us is being (*ens*), which is univocal to all *real* being.[38] This is, however, not the adequate "moving object" (*obiectum motivum*) of the intellect, for being is the first object by commonness but it cannot move the intellect nor cause an intellectual cognition. The moving object of the intellect is *praecise* the singular.[39]

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[36] *Ibid.* (pp. 530–531).

[37] *Ibid.* (p. 533): "Primo, quod nihil est obiectum adaequatum intellectus. (…) Istam conclusionem dico recitative, secundum opinionem quae ponit quod conceptus sive intentiones animae habent tantum esse obiectivum et nullum esse subiectivum. Quia secundum opnionem quae ponit quod conceptus sive intentiones animae sunt verae qualitates, id est subiective exsistentes in anima, est dicendum quod ens est obiectum adaequatum intellectus nostri, quia commune univocum omni per se intelligibili". Already in *Ordinatio*, I, d. 2, q. 8 ("Utrum universale univocum sit aliquid reale existens alicubi subiective"), Ockham had dealt with the two competing opinions. Cf. Ph. Boehner, "The Realistic Conceptualism of William Ockham", in: *Traditio* 4 (1946), pp. 307–335 [reprinted in his *Collected Articles on Ockham*, pp. 156–174].

[38] William of Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, q. 8 (OT II, p. 534): "Secundo dico quod communissimum quod potest apprehendi a nobis est ens quod est univocum omni enti reali; aliter enim non possemus habere aliquam cognitionem nec de Deo nec de substantia".

[39] *Ibid.* (p. 540).

Being: not the "proper" but the "partial" subject of metaphysics

A typical feature of Ockham's understanding of metaphysics is that the "basic" question as to the "proper subject" of this science, which has been characteristic of the "second beginning" of First Philosophy since Avicenna, loses its relevance for him. The question is "meaningless" in his view, because it wrongly assumes that there is a proper subject. This view must have consequences for the metaphysical position of the concept of "being", since "being" was traditionally seen as this subject.

In two places in his work, in the prologue to his Commentary on the *Physics* and in the prologue to his Commentary on the *Sentences*, Ockham discusses the notion of *subiectum scientiae*.[40] His intention is to reduce the importance of this notion by depriving "subject of science" of the philosophical functions ascribed to it. Ockham formulates a number of negative claims: it does not belong to the *ratio* of the subject of a science that it virtually contains the knowledge of the conclusion; that it determinates and specifies the science; that it grants dignity to the science; that it is what is first conceived by the intellect in that science; and that its knowledge is principally intended in that science.[41]

The explanation of these negative claims lies in Ockham's concept of "science". He considers *scientia* as one single *habitus* of the intellect, by which the conclusion of a demonstration is known. The consequence of this meaning is that there are as many sciences as there are demonstrable conclusions. Ockham recognizes—it looks like a concession to the traditional idea of science—that sometimes *scientia* stands for a collection of several *habitus*, related according to a certain order. The science of metaphysics, for instance, which is handed down in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, is such a collection, consisting of many conclusions. Consequently, *scientia* in this sense has many subjects, for the

[40] William of Ockham, *Expositio in libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, prol. (OP IV, pp. 3–14) and *Ordinatio*, I, prol., q. 9 (OT I, Bonaventure, N.Y., 1967, pp. 226–275): "Utrum Deus sub propria ratione deitatis sit subiectum theologiae". Cf. A. Zimmermann, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik? Die Diskussion über den Gegenstand der Metaphysik im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert. Texte und Untersuchung*, Leuven 1998 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales. Bibliotheca, 1), pp. 389–398.

[41] William of Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, prol., q. 9 (OT I, pp. 246–247).

subiectum of a science is identical with the subject of the conclusion.[42] Strictly speaking (*de virtute sermonis*), Ockham concludes, there is not one single subject of metaphysics.[43]

The question as to "the subject of metaphysics" is therefore meaningless (*nihil quaerere*), for such a question falsely presupposes that something is *the* subject of this science. Ockham compares the question "What is the subject of metaphysics?" with the question "Who is the king of the world?" Just as there is no one king of the entire world but various kingdoms with different kings, there is not one subject of the entire metaphysics, but different subjects of its different parts.[44] Metaphysics does not have the unity of a whole, but only that of an aggregate.[45]

It is true that one can ask about the "first" of all subjects of metaphysics, for there exists a certain order between them, just as there is an order between the various kings of the world. This order appears to be manifold, since it is always an order relative to a certain "firstness" (*primitas*). So there is a first subject in the order of predication, in which one is more common than the other, and a first subject in the order of perfection, in which one is nobler than the other. "Being" is the first of the subjects in the order of predication, God the first in the order of perfection. In this way Ockham explains, and at the same time relativizes, the historical controversy on the "subject" of meta-

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[42] For the twofold meaning of *scientia*, cf. William of Ockham, *Expositio in libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, prol., § 2 (OP IV, p. 6) and *Ordinatio*, I, prol., q. 1 (OT I, pp. 8–11). For the notion of *subiectum scientiae*, cf. *Expositio in libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, prol., § 3 (OP IV, pp. 8–9) and *Ordinatio*, I, prol., q. 9 (OT I, pp. 247–248).

[43] William of Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, prol., q. 9 (OT I, p. 255): "Ad tertium dico quod metaphysicae et similiter mathematicae non est unum subiectum, loquendo de virtute sermonis, sed quot sunt subiecta conclusionum tot sunt subiecta scientiarum".

[44] William of Ockham, *Expositio in libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, prol., § 3 (OP IV, pp. 9–10): "Ex istis patet quod quaerere quid est subiectum logicae vel philosophiae naturalis vel metaphysicae (…), nihil est quaerere, quia talis quaestio supponit quod aliquid unum sit subiectum logicae et similiter philosophiae naturalis, quod est manifeste falsum, quia nihil unum est subiectum totius sed diversarum partium diversa sunt subiecta. Unde quaerere quid est subiectum philosophiae naturalis, est simile quaestioni qua quaereretur quis est rex mundi. Quia sicut nullus est unus rex mundi, sed unus est rex unius regni et alter alterius, sic est de subiectis diversarum partium scientiae talis (…)". Cf. *Ordinatio*, I, prol., q. 9 (OT I, p. 259): "Et tunc est simile de quaestione qua quaeritur quid est subiectum metaphysicae (…) et de quaestione qua quaeritur quis est rex mundi vel quis est rex totius christianitatis (…)".

[45] William of Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, prol., q. 8 (OT I, p. 225): "(…) scientia metaphysicalis est una unitate aggregationis". Cf. A. Maurer, "Ockham's Conception of the Unity of Science", in: *Mediaeval Studies* 20 (1958), pp. 98–112.

physics.[46] It is in fact no controversy at all, because the debate is not concerned with alternatives that exclude one another: God or being.

In sum, according to Ockham the proposition "being is the subject of metaphysics" is strictly speaking (*de virtute sermonis*) false. Being is not the subject of the whole of this science but only of a part of it. Yet the proposition "being is the subject of metaphysics" is acceptable, if it means to say that among all the subjects of the diverse parts of metaphysics, being is first by the firstness of predication.[47] In this way there arises a correlation between the subject of metaphysics and the adequate object of the intellect, but, unlike Scotus, Ockham does not dwell on their identity.

11.1.3 *Being and one: The identity and difference between the transcendentals*

Unum is the second transcendental that Ockham considers in his *Summa logicae* (I, c. 39). It serves as a model for determining the identity and difference between "being" and the other transcendentals. He calls "one" a "property of being" (*passio entis*), which means that the relation between "one" and "being" must be understood according to the model of "property" and "subject" he had previously explained in *Summa logicae* I, c. 37. The expression "property of being" implicitly refers to the structure of the science of metaphysics, in which the proper attributes of the subject are examined.

Ockham turns against the ontological implications that are traditionally attached to the model of *subiectum* and *passio*. A property

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[46] William of Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, prol., q. 9 (OT I, pp. 256–257): "Ita dico in proposito quod sunt multa subiecta secundum multitudinem conclusionum habentium distincta subiecta, inter quae tamen est unum primum diversis primitatibus respectu diversorum; et aliquando est unum primum una primitate et aliud primum alia primitate. Et ista forte est causa quare aliqui posuerunt quod ens est subiectum metaphysicae, et alii quod Deus; quia inter omnia subiecta Deus est primum primitate perfectionis, et ens est primum primitate praedicationis". Cf. *Expositio in libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, prol., § 3 (OP IV, p. 10).

[47] William of Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, prol., q. 9 (OT I, pp. 258–259): "Et ita, de virtute sermonis, dictum Commentatoris est falsum quando dicit quod ens est subiectum metaphysicae. Quia cum ens non sit subiectum omnium partium metaphysicae sed unius vel aliquarum certarum partium (…). Tamen secundum intentionem suam ens est subiectum metaphysicae, quia per istam propositionem 'ens est subiectum metaphysicae' intelligit istam propositionem 'inter omnia subiecta diversarum partium metaphysicae ens est primum primitate praedicationis'".

is not a thing outside the mind (*res extra animam*) that inheres in a subject, but is something that is predicable *per se* of a subject.[48] Properties of being are concepts distinct from "being". Ockham also rejects the Scotist formal distinction *a parte rei* between being and the other transcendentals. "One" does not signify "a determinate thing that is supervenient (*superveniens*) to being and of which being is not said essentially and *in quid*"—the same holds for "true" and "good".[49]

The key problem concerning the relations between the transcendentals, the problem of the "addition", is explicitly raised in the commentary on the *Sentences*, in which Ockham discusses the question: "Whether the unity by which God is called 'one' is something added to God?"[50] He expounds a conception of unity which is Aquinas's—Ockham does not mention Thomas by name, but cites *verbatim* his account from *De potentia* q. 9, a. 7. In this text, Aquinas clearly distinguishes between the transcendental or metaphysical "one" and the mathematical "one". The transcendental "one", which is convertible with "being", does not add a distinct reality to being, but only the negation of division; the mathematical one, which is the principle of number, belongs to the category of quantity and adds something positive to that of which it is said, namely the property of "measure" (*mensura*). Ockham criticizes this conception, since it implies that one and the same thing has two unities.[51] He agrees, however, with Aquinas that the "one", which is the property of being, does not add a reality to being.[52]

Ockham presents a model for the relation between being and the transcendental terms convertible with it that is different from Aquinas's and Scotus's model. His account uses the fundamental division

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[48] William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, I, 37 (OP I, pp. 104–106).

[49] William of Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 2, q. 1 (OT II, pp. 22–23): "(…) 'unum' non significat aliquam rem determinatam supervenientem enti, de qua ens non praedicetur essentialiter et in quid. (…) Ita est de vero et bono (…)".

[50] *Ibid.*, d. 24, q. 1 (OT IV, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1979, pp. 72–89).

[51] *Ibid.* (OT IV, p. 75): "Si dicatur quod praeter unitatem quae est principium numeri, habet quantitas continua aliam unitatem sibi essentialem quae nihil addit quantitati continuae, et quod illa per se continetur sub uno convertibili cum ente et non unitas quae est principium numeri, contra: ex isto sequeretur quod eiusdem rei essent duae unitates, quod videtur impossibile".

[52] *Ibid.* (OT IV, p. 78): "prima conclusio erit ista quod hoc nomen 'unum' vel 'unitas' (…) non importat aliquid reali additum illi [*sc.* rei], nec absolutum nec respectivum". *Ibid.* (p. 79) "Et si isto modo alii intelligant [*sc.* Thomas Aquinas] quando dicunt quod unum non addit ultra illud quod est unum nisi negationem vel privationem divisionis vel multitudinis, concedo cum eis".

between absolute and connotative terms from his logic of terms. "One" and "being" are different concepts, because if they were identical, it would be impossible to state truly the propositions "Being is the subject of metaphysics" and "One is not the subject of metaphysics". "One" is a concept distinct from "being", because it *connotes* something distinct. This appears from the nominal definition of "one": "being undivided in itself and divided from others". The concept of "one" thus signifies "being" *in recto* and something else *in obliquo*. The primary meaning implies identity, but from the secondary meaning it follows that the concepts of "one" and "being" are not synonyms, because there is some "real non-identity" between what is signified primarily and directly and what is signified secondarily and indirectly.[53] In reply to the objection in the *Sentences* commentary that if "one" does not add something real to God, it would be nugatory to say "God is one", which is clearly false, Ockham maintains that in order to avoid such a *nugatio* it is sufficient that something else is connoted by "one".[54] The connotation model provides a more correct way to understand the addition.

Ockham also explains the identity and the difference between "being" and "one" with another semantic theory he had presented in the *Summa logicae*, i.e. the doctrine of supposition. "Supposition" is a property of a term in a proposition and can be divided into "personal" and "simple" supposition. "Personal" supposition occurs when a term supposits or stands for its significate, "simple" supposition occurs when a term stands for an intention of the soul or concept and has no significative function.[55] Ockham argues that if the terms "one" and "being" have personal supposition, they do not differ from one

[53] *Ibid.*, d. 2, q. 1 (OT II, pp. 22–23): "quod ens quod est subiectum metaphysicae et unum quod non est subiectum metaphysicae non sunt idem realiter, quia sic sunt distincti conceptus quorum unus non est alius. (…) Nunquam tamen possent ista contradictoria verificari de ente et uno nisi essent distinctae res quae aliter importarentur per unum conceptum et per alium, ita quod habent distincta quid nominis (…). Ita est de ente et uno, quod ens vel non habet quid nominis, vel habet aliud quid nominis quam unum; unde quid nominis unius est quod est ens indivisum in se et ab aliis divisum vel distinctum; illud autem non quid nominis entis. Et patet quod per illud quid nominis importatur aliqua non-identitas realis, et ideo isti conceptus non sunt synonymi, et potest aliquid vere praedicari de uno et negari de reliquo".

[54] *Ibid.*, d. 24, q. 1 (OT IV, p. 89): "ad vitandum nugationem sufficit quod [*del.*: non] connotet aliquid aliud tali modo quo unum connotat, licet illud non addatur". The *non* in the critical edition must, in accordance with several manuscripts, be deleted.

[55] Cf. William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, I, 64 (OP I, pp. 195–196).

another, for they stand for the same thing; "one" does not differ more from "being" than "being" does from "being". Because of this identity it would be false to say that "being is the subject of metaphysics" and "one is not the subject but the *passio*". If, however, "being" and "one" have simple supposition, they differ *simpliciter* because they stand for diverse concepts.[56]

Conclusion

Ockham's metaphysics is not a *scientia transcendens* in the sense that the doctrine of the transcendentals is central in this science. Yet he allows for a distinct place in his work for terms that are "common to all things", such as "being" and "one". His account of these terms acquires a special character, since it reflects what has been called the "Ockhamist revolution", which consists in the "semanticizing" of thought.[57] The semantic approach determines Ockham's doctrine of the transcendentals, since he integrates this doctrine into his theory of supposition and that of connotation. In this sense one could speak of "a linguistic transformation of the doctrine of the transcendentals".[58]

Was Ockham original in this respect? As we have seen (see ch. 10.1.4), Peter Auriol, in his *Quodlibet* (datable 1320), advanced the connotation model for the interpretation of the relation between the convertible transcendentals and being. He also used the theory of supposition, but with a somewhat different intention from Ockham's. Auriol applies the distinction between "personal" and "simple" supposition to the concept of "being" in order to show the possibility of metaphysics. Only if "being" has personal supposition, does it have

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[56] William of Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 24, q. 1 (OT IV, p. 85): "ista 'unum differt ab ente' vel 'unum et ens differunt', potest distingui eo quod termini possunt supponere simpliciter vel personaliter, vel unus terminus simpliciter et alius personaliter. Primo modo dico quod simpliciter differunt, nec sunt idem. Quia tunc isti termini supponunt pro conceptibus, et ist conceptus (…) non sunt idem conceptus. Secundo modo dico quod unum non differt ab ente, nec simpliciter nec secundum quid nec formaliter nec quocumque modo, non plus quam ens differt ab ente. (…) Tertio modo accipiendo ens et unum, dico quod differunt". Cf. *Ibid.*, d. 2, q. 1 (OT II, pp. 23–24): "Unde si isti termini supponant personaliter nihil potest vere affirmari de ente et negari ab uno; et ideo sic accipiendo terminos haec est falsa 'ens est subiectum metaphysicae', et haec similiter 'unum est passio', vel 'unum est posterius ente', et sic de aliis".

[57] C. Panaccio, *Les mots, les concepts et les choses*, pp. 70–78: "La révolution occamiste".

[58] D. Perler, "Ockhams Transformation der Transzendentalien", p. 379.

properties distinct from it that can be studied in a science of being. The doctrinal relation between Auriol and Ockham has hardly been examined and is still untransparent. But it was Ockham's views that changed the discussions, dominated by the Scotist model.

11.2 John Buridan

The impact of nominalism becomes manifest in the work of John Buridan (1295/1300–1358/61), the most influential philosopher in the period after Ockham. He became Master of Arts ca. 1325 and remained in the Arts Faculty at Paris for the rest of his life. Unlike Ockham, he wrote a *Metaphysics* commentary, even in multiple redactions. This commentary, composed ca. 1350/55 (in the *ultima lectura*), contains an almost canonical set of questions relevant to the doctrine of the transcendentals:

IV, q. 4: "Utrum metaphysice sit assignandum unum subiectum proprium adequatum".
q. 5: "Utrum metaphysice proprium subiectum sit ens".
q. 6: "Utrum hoc nomen 'ens' significat substantias et accidentia secundum unam rationem".
q. 7: "Utrum isti termini 'ens' et 'unum' convertuntur".[59]

The questions concerning the proper subject of metaphysics, the common predicability of "being", and the convertibility of "being" and "one" show the reception of the nominalist innovations but also some divergences from Ockham's thought.[60]

The proper subject of metaphysics: Being

Q. 4 of book IV reads: "Whether a proper and adequate subject of metaphysics can be assigned?" Buridan successively explains the key terms of the question: "metaphysics", "subject" and "proper and adequate subject".

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[59] John Buridan, *In Metaphysicen Aristotelis quaestiones* IV, qq. 4–7 (ed. Paris 1588 [*lege*: 1518] [reprinted in Frankfurt am Main 1964], fol. 14vb–18va).

[60] Cf. J. Biard, "L'analyse logique des termes transcendantaux selon Jean Buridan", in: G. Federici Vescovini (ed.), *Le problème des transcendantaux du XIV^e^ au XVII^e^ siècle*, Paris 2002, pp. 51–66.

By "metaphysics" he means "a unity by aggregation that contains integrally all processes and conclusions handed down in the metaphysical books".[61] The unity of metaphysics is a unity of order or aggregation, which Buridan, like Ockham, compares with the unity of an army. But he draws from this comparison a different conclusion to that of Ockham concerning metaphysics as an integral whole, which Buridan calls *metaphysica totalis* or *metaphysica maxima*, in relation to the partial metaphysical sciences. Just as the "total" army of the king contains several "partial" armies under the command of dukes, so the *metaphysica maxima*, which considers all things, contains several partial sciences of metaphysics, which are of a limited extent because they only consider a class of beings, for instance, the separate substances. The *metaphysica maxima* "integrates" these partial metaphysical sciences.[62]

The term "subject" has many senses, but must be taken in the present question—that is, in the context of the theory of science—in relation to "property" (*passio*). Buridan claims that in the "total" metaphysics and in every science that has a unity of aggregation a "proper and adequate subject" must be assigned. A subject is "proper and adequate", when everything in a science is considered under the formal point of view (*ratio*), by which it is ordered to that subject, either as part or as principle or as property.[63]

Buridan's claim clearly differs from Ockham's view. As we have seen, the basic question of medieval metaphysics as to the "proper subject" of this science is for Ockham "meaningless" because it wrongly assumes that there is such a subject. Just as there is no one king of the whole world, but various kingdoms with different kings, there is not one subject of metaphysics as a whole, but there are different subjects of its different parts. According to Buridan, however, metaphysics as a whole has a "proper and adequate" subject, and he describes how such a subject can be found in a science. One has to look for the most general genus (*communissimum genus*), which does not, however,

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[61] John Buridan, *In Metaphysicen*, IV, q. 4 (ed. Paris 1518, fol. 14vb).

[62] *Ibid.*, q. 3 (fol. 14va): "Verbi gratia maximus exercitus regis continet plures exercitus partiales ipsius, scilicet ducis illius comitis. Ita etiam concederemus de metaphysica. Una enim maxima metaphysica considerans de omnibus continet unam minorem considerantem solum de substantiis separatis, et aliam etiam solum considerantem de substantiis sensibilibus, et unam considerantem de actu et potentia et sic de aliis. Et illa maxima integratur ex illis minoribus".

[63] *Ibid.*, q. 4 (fol. 15ra-b).

transcend the limits of that science and which is considered as subject with respect to the first and main properties examined in that science. This genus will be called the "proper and adequate subject".[64]

The presented determination of the subject, Buridan asserts, is in agreement with what philosophers have said about the subject of a science. It is usually said that in every science the subject must be what is first known (*primo notum*), and this is reasonable, for in a science everything is considered according to the order to the subject. It is also said that a science is "one" because of the unity of its subject, and this is true: the subject founds unity, just as the total army is called "one" because of the unity of its commander, towards which the parts of the army are ordered.[65]

In book IV, q. 5, of his commentary, Buridan establishes that the proper and adequate subject of metaphysics is being, but he precizes this conclusion. The proper and adequate subject of *every* science is being, for the subject is being or non-being and nobody maintains that a science treats of non-being. Therefore, one has to say that the proper subject of metaphysics is the *term* "being". This term meets the condition of a proper and adequate subject indicated in the preceding question: a more common general genus than "being" cannot be assigned; yet the term does not transcend the limits of this science because metaphysics deals with all things (*consideret de omnibus*). Moreover, the most general *passiones* of this science, such as "one", "cause or what is caused", are properties that are "appropriate" (*appropriatae*) to the term "being". Finally, this term is the subject that qua commonness is proportional to the first principles of metaphysics.[66]

Buridan briefly outlines the structure of the science of being. As every science, metaphysics examines the "parts" and the "properties" of its subject. The "parts" are the ten categories, the "properties" are the connotative terms that are convertible with the term "being", such as "one", and the terms that in the form of a disjunction are convertible, such as "cause or what is caused", "act or potency".[67] To the

[64] *Ibid.* (fol. 15rb).
[65] *Ibid.* (fol. 15rb–va).
[66] *Ibid.*, q. 5 (fol. 16ra).
[67] *Ibid.* (fol. 16rb): "Eius [*sc.* termini 'ens'] etiam sunt passiones propriae, scilicet termini connotativi cum eo convertibiles, ut isti termini unum, idem, diversum, et etiam sub disiunctione causa vel causatum, prius vel posterius, actus vel potentia et sic de multis aliis".

convertibility of "being" and "one" Buridan devotes a separate question (q. 7).

Buridan also clarifies the concept of "being" (*ens*) that is the subject of metaphysics. The term can be understood in two ways, as participle and as noun (*nomen*). If "being" is taken as participle, it cannot be posited as the proper subject of metaphysics, since it connotes the present (and thus excludes beings). Then the terms *res* or *aliquid* must instead be posited as the proper subject. If, however, "being" is taken as noun, it is synonymous with "thing" or "something" and can be advanced as the subject of metaphysics.[68]

The common predicability of "being"

Q. 6 of book IV reads: "Whether the name '*ens*' signifies substances and accidents according to one *ratio* or according to one concept".[69] The scope of Buridan's discussion of the common predicability of "being" is restricted in two respects: it is limited to the categories and to univocity; the idea of an analogous predication of "being" is not considered. Despite this restricted scope there are two remarkable elements in Buridan's reply.

What is first striking is that Buridan introduces an aspect that had thus far not actually played a role in the debate about the analogous or univocal predication of "being". He finds the question raised very difficult (*valde difficilis*), because Aristotle's opinion on accidents is quite different from what Christian faith holds. The doctrine of the Eucharist teaches the "transsubstantiation" of bread and wine into the body of Christ, whereas the accidents of bread and wine remain present without their substances. Faith thus presupposes the separability of accidents, a view that Buridan sees as philosophically relevant for the concept of "being". He does not make an attempt to harmonize

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[68] *Ibid.*: "Si iste terminus 'ens' acciperetur prout est participium, non bene poneretur hic subiectum primum propter hoc, quod connotat praesens tempus. Immo magis hic deberet poni subiectum primum iste terminus 'res', vel iste terminus 'aliquid'. Sed si ille terminus 'ens' accipiatur nominaliter, tunc est nomen synonymum cum isto termino 'res' vel isto termino 'aliquid', et sic est ponendum subiectum in ista scientia".

[69] *Ibid.*, q. 6 (fol. 16va). Cf. P. J. J. M. Bakker, "Inhérence, univocité et séparabilité des accidents eucharistiques. Observations sur les rapports entre métaphysique et théologie au XIV^{e} siècle", in: J. L. Solère / Z. Kałuża (eds.), *La servante et la consolatrice. La philosophie dans ses rapports avec la théologie au Moyen Age*, Paris 2002 (Textes et Traditions, 3), pp. 193–214; with an appendix (pp. 219–232): "Jean Buridan, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam (secundum ultimam lecturam)*, Liber IV, quaestio 6".

the divergent views and presents a twofold reply, one according to Aristotle's opinion and another according to what we must hold on the basis of faith (*ex fide*). The first Aristotelian reply concludes that "being" is not said of substantial terms and accidental terms according to the same *ratio*, because it is said of substantial terms according to one simple concept without any connotation but is said of accidental terms, such as "whiteness", according to a connotative concept. The second reply concedes that "being" is said of substantial terms and accidental terms according to one common concept free from connotation. Inherence or dependency, priority or posteriority in being—it does not matter, because without any such connotation "whiteness" is said to be a being (*ens*).[70]

The second remarkable element of Buridan's account is common to both replies. At the end of the first reply, he suggests that *quid*, which is synonymous with *ens*, is more the first category and the most general genus than the name 'substance'. At the end of the second reply, Buridan makes a similar observation. He sees it as a consequence of the presented solution that *ens* or *aliquid* is one *genus univocum* of which one species would be a term standing without connotation for all substances indifferently, and another species a term standing for all non connotative accidental terms. One must concede, Buridan concludes, that the name 'substance' is not the *genus generalissimum*, but that rather the name *quid* or *aliquid* is this genus.[71] The result of Buridan's account is the "homogenization" of the term "being": it is the most general genus, which implies the categorialization of the term—an idea that is utterly foreign to Aristotle, for whom being is not a genus.

Being and one: The connotation model

Q. 7 of book IV reads: "Whether the terms 'being' and 'one' are convertible with respect to their significations so that what is signified by one of them is also signified by the other, and the reverse". Buridan also describes convertibility in relation to predication: two terms are

[70] John Buridan, *In Metaphysicen*, IV, q. 6 (ed. Paris 1518, fol. 16vb–17rb).

[71] *Ibid.* (fol. 17rb–va). In particular: "Nec mirum, quia que nunc dicta sunt, fundantur super id quod est contra opinionem Aristotelis, sicut arguebatur. Et ita etiam oportet concedere quod hoc nomen 'substantia' non esset genus generalissimum, sed hoc nomen 'quid' vel 'aliquid'".

convertible if each of the terms is predicated universally and truly of the other.[72]

The question does not only concern the relation of "being" to the other transcendentals, but also the relation of the subject of metaphysics to its properties. With respect to the identity and difference between "being" and "one" Buridan advances three conclusions *secundum Aristotelem*, but it is Aristotle read through nominalist eyes. The first conclusion is that the terms "being" and "one" are convertible, because every being is one (otherwise it would not be a being but beings) and every one is being. Their convertibility is reducible to the identical supposition of "being" and "one": the terms stand for the same thing and are therefore predicable of one another. The second conclusion is that the terms "being" and "one" are not synonyms but differ according to reason (*secundum rationem*). The difference between the transcendentals is explained according to Ockham's connotation model: "being" or "something" (*aliquid*) is an absolute term; "one" by contrast is a connotative term, since it connotes the absence of division. Buridan's third conclusion is that the terms "being" and "one" do not signify dispositions added to the things for which they stand (*supponunt*).[73] Every thing is formally "being" and "one" by itself, and the connotation model provides a more correct way to understand the addition of "one" to "being".

Concluding observations

John Buridan is another medieval philosopher whose modernity has been claimed because of an alleged "agreement" between his meta-

[72] *Ibid.*, q. 7 (fol. 17vb).

[73] *Ibid.*, q. 7 (fol. 18ra): "Ponamus igitur secundum Aristotelem tres conclusiones. Prima est quod isti termini 'ens' et 'unum' convertuntur ad invicem: quia omne ens est unum (aliter non esset ens sed entia) et etiam omne unum est ens (…). Alia conclusio est quod isti termini 'ens' et 'unum' non sunt synonymi (…), differunt enim secundum rationem: iste enim terminus 'ens' vel 'aliquid' accipitur secundum conceptum simplicem, scilicet absolutum a connotatione, et iste terminus 'unum' est terminus connotativus; connotat enim carentiam divisionis. Tertia conclusio est quod isti termini 'ens' et 'unum' non significant aliquas dispositiones additas rebus pro quibus supponunt". Cf. *ibid.*, q. 4 (fol. 15ra–b): "Subiectum et passio vocantur duo termini pro eodem supponentes et sic de se invicem predicabiles, quorum unus addit super significationem alterius aliquam connotationem, unus terminus absolutus a connotatione dicetur subiectum, et terminus connotativus dicetur passio".

physics and Immanuel Kant's transcendental philosophy. In Buridan's thought a transformation would have occurred from a transcendental consideration in the medieval sense to a transcendental consideration in the Kantian sense, according to which objectivity is founded on the human intellect itself. The consequence was that "the transcendental consideration in the medieval sense possesses only a nominal but no real significance".[74]

In the case of Buridan, the modernity claim is as untenable as it is with respect to Dietrich of Freiberg and William of Ockham. As we have seen, Buridan's *Metaphysics* commentary does provide an account of the transcendental terms, modest as it may be;[75] and it is not true that the transcendental consideration has only a "nominal" significance: the proper subject of metaphysics is "being"; the terms "being" and "one" are convertible. It is strange that the supposedly nominal significance of the transcendentals in the medieval sense is supported by a reference to a statement in the work *Quaestiones in praedicamenta*. In a discussion of relative terms, Buridan argues that a relative concept needs a previous absolute concept: "therefore, we must first conceive the thing absolutely, at least by the concept from which the name 'being' (*ens*), 'thing' (*res*) or 'something' (*aliquid*) is taken, before we conceive the thing relatively".[76] How is it possible to see in this statement, which maintains that "being" is the first absolute concept, an expression of the "nominal" significance of Buridan's doctrine of the transcendentals?

Buridan adopts the main "nominalist" innovation of the doctrine of the transcendentals, the logico-semantic approach. The subject of metaphysics is the *term* "being", the convertibility of "being" and "one" is explained by the theory of supposition, and their difference

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[74] G. Krieger, "Menschliche Vernunft als Terminus der Reflexion. Zu einer Übereinstimmung zwischen mittelalterlicher Philosophie und Kant", in: *Kant-Studien* 96 (2005), pp. 182–207, here p. 193.

[75] Buridan uses the term *transcendens* in his work *Summulae: In praedicamenta*, tr. 3.4.6 (ed. E. P. Bos, Nijmegen 1994 (Artistarium, 10/3), p. 59): "(…) de isto nomine transcendente 'aliquid'".

[76] John Buridan, *Quaestiones in praedicamenta*, q. 9 (ed. J. Schneider, München 1983 (Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Veröffentlichung der Kommission für die Herausgabe ungedruckter Texte aus der mittelalterlichen Geisteswelt, 11), p. 96): "Conceptus enim relativus indiget conceptu absoluto praevio; prius enim oportet concipere rem absolute, saltem conceptu, a quo sumitur hoc nomen 'ens', 'res' vel 'aliquid', quam concipiamus rem relative".

is understood according to the connotation model. He does not offer, however, a systematic account of all the transcendentals together. A notable feature is the repeatedly stated identification of *ens* with *res* and *aliquid*: "thing" and "something" are synonyms of "being", taken as a noun.

CHAPTER TWELVE

NEOPLATONIC CRITIQUES OF TRANSCENDENTAL METAPHYSICS

The origin of the doctrine of the transcendentals is marked by an anti-Platonic tendency. One of the formative texts of the medieval doctrine was Aristotle's criticism of Plato's Idea of the Good in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. He denies the existence of such an Idea; the good is common in the sense that it, just as being, is found in all categories—a commonness that was interpreted by medieval commentators as "transcendental". Thirteenth-century authors, like Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, did not see an irreconcilable opposition between Platonism and Aristotelianism and attempted a synthesis of a transcendental conception of metaphysics with the Neoplatonic idea of divine transcendence, as becomes manifest in their commentaries on Dionysius the Areopagite. But about a century after the beginning of the doctrine of the transcendentals in Philip the Chancellor, we find a highly critical assessment of this doctrine from a Neoplatonic perspective in Berthold of Moosburg (12.1)—a criticism that was continued by the most original thinker of the fifteenth century, Nicholas of Cusa (12.2). One does not need to wait for Immanuel Kant for a critique of medieval "transcendental philosophy".

12.1 Berthold of Moosburg: The superiority of Platonism over "Aristotle's" transcendental philosophy

One of the very few facts we know about the life of Berthold of Moosburg (d. post 1361) is that he became Eckhart's successor as head of the *studium generale* of the Dominicans in Cologne. He is the last representative of the so-called "German Dominican School" (see ch. VIII). Berthold owes his fame to the voluminous commentary on the *Elementatio theologica* of Proclus that he wrote sometime between 1327 and 1361.[1] This commentary, the only one on the Neoplatonic

[1] On Berthold, cf. A. de Libera, *Introduction à la mystique rhénane d'Albert le Grand à Maître Eckhart,* Paris 1984, pp. 317–442. L. Sturlese, "Der Prokloskommentar

thinker composed in the Middle Ages, is an important witness of the vitality of the Platonic tradition, for, as we shall see, the commentator fully identifies himself with the philosophical project he is commenting upon.

1. Berthold sees Proclus's writing as a systematization of Plato's philosophy. Among the disciples of Plato, Proclus was the most eminent one, since, in the *Elementatio*, he put Plato's theorems in order and explained this order in a most subtle way.[2] Several elements in Berthold's commentary reinforce this systematic tendency. In his account of Proclus's propositions he integrates the main strands of the Platonic tradition. On the first page of his commentary, Berthold enumerates the *doctores ecclesiae* and the *philosophi famosi*, from whose works he had "compiled" his explanation. Number one on the former list is Dionysius, on the latter Plato; indeed (pseudo-) Dionysius the Areopagite plays a prominent role in the commentary. The "Plato" of whom Berthold speaks is in fact "a person with a double face": it is Proclus-Dionysius.[3]

Another indication of the systematic tendency, which at the same time is illustrative of the dominance of the Aristotelian idea of science, is the fact that Berthold, in one of the prologues, raises the same question that the Aristotle commentators asked with respect to metaphysics: what is the "subject" of this science? All things that are dealt with in Proclus's book must agree in the notion of *subiectum*, on the basis of which this philosophy is one science. Berthold argues that the subject of the *Elementatio theologica* is "the divine good" (*bonum divinum*). Plato's philosophy is a theology and an "agathology", a doctrine

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Bertholds von Moosburg und die philosophischen Probleme der nacheckhartschen Zeit", in: K. Ruh (ed.), *Abendländische Mystik im Mittelalter. Symposion Kloster Engelberg 1984*, Stuttgart 1986 (Germanistische Symposien. Berichtsband, 8), pp. 145–161 [reprinted in: L. Sturlese, *Homo divinus. Philosphische Projekte in Deutschland zwischen Meister Eckhart und Heinrich Seuse*, Stuttgart 2007, pp. 137–154]. The critical edition of his commentary *Expositio super Elementationem theologicam Procli* that has been appearing since 1984 in the *Corpus Philosophorum Teutonicorum Medii Aevi* VI [= CPTMA] will cover 9 volumes.

[2] Berthold of Moosburg, *Expositio super Elementationem theologicam Procli,* Expositio tituli A (ed. M. R. Pagnoni-Sturlese / L. Sturlese, in: CPTMA, Vol. VI/1: Prologus—Propositiones 1–13, Hamburg 1984, p. 37).

[3] A. de Libera, *Introduction à la mystique rhénane,* pp. 388–389.

of the good.[4] In the latter respect there seems to be a shift in comparison to Proclus, who presents a doctrine of the One or "henology". The opposition is of course not absolute, for the Neoplatonic One is also called the "Good",[5] but Berthold's preference may be influenced by the metaphysics of the Good in Dionysius the Areopagite.

Another feature of Berthold's commentary is that it does not make any attempt to harmonize Platonism and Aristotelianism. He distances himself from the program formulated by Boethius of a fundamental "concordance" between the two protagonists of ancient philosophy: "*Plato et Aristoteles (…) non concordant*".[6] In the *praeambulum* of his Commentary, Berthold opposes the *scientia Platonica*, which is concerned with the divine, to the *metaphysica Peripatetica* that deals with being insofar as it is being. He argues that the Platonic position is superior to the Aristotelian *habitus* of metaphysical wisdom and is therefore called a *supersapientia*, since it deals not only with the principles of being, but also with principles that are above being (*superentia*), such as the first good. The commentator clearly identifies himself with this more eminent position by speaking of "our (*nostra*) divine superwisdom".[7]

2. Berthold's criticism of Aristotle's ontological conception of metaphysics is specified in the commentary itself, which is carefully constructed: it discusses first what is presupposed (*suppositum*) by Proclus's propositions, and explains then the meaning of the *propositum* itself.

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[4] Berthold of Moosburg, *Expositio super Elementationem theologicam Procli*, Expositio tituli I (ed. Pagnoni-Sturlese / Sturlese, pp. 46–47): "(…) necesse est omnia convenire, de quibus hic tractatur, in una ratione subiecti, propter quam etiam ista philosophia est una scientia. Quod subiectum vocetur, sicut et vere est, bonum divinum (…). Ex praedictis apparet, quod bonum divinum secundum ordinem providentiae naturalis est subiectum huius libri, quod exprimitur per li: *Elementatio theologica*".

[5] For the identity between the "good" and the "one", cf. *ibid.,* prop. 7 A (ed. Pagnoni-Sturlese / Sturlese, p. 140): "(…) in prima et absolutissima intentione boni sive unius, quod idem est"; prop. 13 I (pp. 221–222).

[6] *Ibid.*, Praeambulum C (p. 65).

[7] *Ibid.*, (pp. 65–66): "Igitur habitus istius nostrae divinalis supersapientiae excedit omnem alium habitum, non solum scientiarum, sed etiam habitum intellectus, scilicet sapientiam, per quem Aristoteles in sua prima philosophia, quae solum est entium, quia entis in eo, quod ens, accipit sua principia. (…) quid dicemus de nostra supersapientia, quae est acceptio cum certitudine non solum principiorum entium, quae secundum Aristotelem etiam sunt entia, sed etiam principiorum, quae sunt super entia, et signanter prime boni" (…). *Ibid.* (p. 68): "Ex dictis evidens est eminentia habitus supersapientialis scientiae Platonicae ad habitum sapientialem metaphysicae".

In this analysis, Berthold appeals again and again to the different philosophical positions of Plato and Aristotle. A telling example is his account of the *suppositum* of the 11th proposition ("All beings proceed from a single first cause"). It is, according to the commentator, the proper place for assigning the difference between "good" and "being", since Proclus, in this place in the *Elementatio*, begins to deal with the notion of "being". But, as Berthold observes, Aristotle and Plato held different views of being, the one, and the good.[8]

Typical of Aristotle's position is the transcendental way of thought.

(i) He posits some *communia,* which he calls *transcendentia,* because they surpass the single categories and "go around all of them (*circumeunt*)". To these transcendentals "being", "one", "good", "true", "thing" and "what" or "something" (*quid seu aliquid*) belong. They are really identical and convertible with each other according to their supposits, conceptually however, different.[9]

(ii) Among the common notions "being" is first: it is the most formal of all concepts, by which every thing is distinguished from nothing or non-being. The argument for the priority of "being" is that it is the last in the "analysis" (*resolutio*) of our concepts and consequently the first in the composition. The other transcendentals add something in concept to "being"; "good", for instance, adds the notion of "appetible".[10]

(iii) The most remarkable feature of Berthold's account of the Aristotelian position is the conclusion that the transcendentals do not have extramental reality. This idea seems to be the consequence of the kind of generality that applies to "being". "Being" is what is

[8] *Ibid.*, prop. 11 A (p. 185): "De primo sciendum, quod, ut aliqualiter tactum est super 1 elemento, ens, unum, bonum aliter accipiuntur ab Aristotele et aliter a Platone".

[9] *Ibid.*: "Aristoteles enim (…) ponit quaedam communia, quae vocat 'transcendentia eo, quod circumeunt omne genus praedicamenti, puta ens, unum, bonum, verum, res, quid seu aliquid, quae secundum ipsum idem sunt re et convertuntur secundum supposita, licet differant secundum proprias rationes'".

[10] *Ibid.* (pp. 185–186): "'Inter quae tamen ipsum ens dicit esse primam et formalissimam omnium intentionum formalium, qua unaquaeque res differt a nihilo vel non ente simpliciter', quia, sicut ipsum est ultimum in resolutione, ita est primum in compositione natura et intellectu. (…) Unde oportet, ut dicit, omnia alia addere super ens, quod de intellectu entis non sit. Et talis additio non potest esse nisi rationis tantum (…)".

> most common (*communissimum*) by the commonness of abstraction, realized by the intellect, which effects universality in things. "Hence, *ens* does not have being in natural reality, but only in the soul". "Being" owes its commonness to the activity of the intellect and thus has only intramental being.[11]

If "being" as the first of the *communia* does not have extramental reality, this characteristic also holds for the notions consequent upon "being" and is thus a mark of the transcendentals as such. But this interpretation is faced with a difficulty. Berthold refers to a well-known passage of the *Metaphysics* (VI, c. 4), in which Aristotle states that good and evil, in contrast to the true and false, are in things. This statement, which had been advanced in several medieval texts as an objection against the transcendentality of the "true", because it affirms its mental character, is used here as an argument against the intramental conception of (at least some) transcendentals. Aristotle's assertion of the extramental reality of good and evil is true, Berthold replies, with respect to their subjects (*subiective*); according to their concepts (*conceptibiliter*), however, good and evil are in the soul. He adds another argument for the claim that "being" does not have extramental reality, based on the notion of "object of the intellect" (*obiectum intellectus*). "Being" is the first object of the intellect, because nothing can be known unless it is being in act. What is, however, *per se* object of the intellect, is within the intellect.[12]

A striking aspect of Berthold's exposition is his identification of Aristotle's philosophy with the doctrine of the *transcendentia*. His "Aristotle" has undergone a medieval metamorphosis, insofar as in the Greek philosopher there is certainly no *system* of the transcendentals; the development of a systematic theory was an original achievement of thirteenth-century philosophy. Berthold states in his commentary that Aristotle's account "was collected from many places" (*ut ex multis locis colligitur*),[13] yet it is likely that this collection of texts is not based

[11] *Ibid.* (p. 186): "Ens autem sic acceptum est communissimum in se communitate abstractionis, quam facit intellectus, qui efficit universalitatem in rebus. Et sic ipsum ens non habet esse in rerum natura nisi in anima".

[12] *Ibid.*: "Nec obstat, quod dicit bonum et malum esse in rebus; quod verum est subiective, sed conceptibiliter sunt in anima. Unde et ens est primum obiectum intellectus, cum nihil possit sciri nisi ens actu (…): per se autem obiectum intellectus est intra intellectum".

[13] *Ibid.* (p. 185).

on a reading of Aristotle but has rather to be traced back to a medieval author, who also belongs to the "German Dominican School". All three features that Berthold ascribes to the Aristotelian position are taken from Dietrich of Freiberg's doctrine of the transcendentals (see ch. 8.1.2).

The first element is a general description of the notions that are called *transcendentia*. But the fact that *quid* is listed among these notions immediately points in the direction of Dietrich, for typical of his doctrine is the place he gives to "what". In his treatise *De quiditatibus entium*, Dietrich pictures the transcendentals in a similar way to Berthold's Aristotle: "'Being', 'what' (*quid*), 'true' and 'one' are *transcendentia*, go aound (*circueunt*) all beings; they are convertible with each other according to the supposits, although they are conceptually different".[14] The second element in Berthold's commentary, the conceptual priority of "being", is phrased with the same terminology as Dietrich employs in many places, for instance, in his treatise *De origine*: "The *ratio* of being is the first and most formal of all concepts, by which a thing is distinguished from nothing".[15] Concerning the third and most remarkable element in Berthold's account, that is, the claim that "being" does not have extramental reality, the situation is somewhat more complex. Dietrich does not teach this idea, but his influence is evident in Berthold's additional argument for the claim, which is based on the notion of "object of the intellect". As Dietrich in *De origine* explains, the first object of the intellect, being as such (*ens simpliciter*), is being in act, because otherwise it would not have the feature of an object. It has this being through the activity of the intellect (see ch. 8.1.1). Apparently Berthold sees it as a consequence of Dietrich's view of the constitutive role of the intellect that "being" does not have extramental reality.

Our textual analysis shows that Dietrich of Freiberg served as a model for Berthold's Aristotle. This conclusion contains a critical implication. If Berthold, by identifying Aristotle's position with the doctrine of the

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[14] Cf. Dietrich of Freiberg, *Tractatus de quiditatibus entium*, 7 (3) (ed. R. Imbach / J.-D. Cavigioli, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. III, Hamburg 1983, p. 109): "(…) ens et quid et verum et unum et similia sunt transcendentia, et circueunt omnia entia et secundum supposita convertuntur. Quamvis propriis rationibus different (…)".

[15] Cf. Dietrich of Freiberg, *Tractatus de origine rerum praedicamentalium*, 3 (8) (ed. L. Sturlese, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. III, p. 159): "(…) ratio entis (…) est prima et formalissima omnium intentionum (…) qua res primo formaliter differt a nihilo".

transcendentals and presenting this doctrine in the version it has in Dietrich, intends a fundamental criticism of Aristotle's view, he at the same time aims at a criticism of the philosopher from Freiberg. The historiographical construct of a "German Dominican School" should not obscure the doctrinal heterogeneity.

3. Berthold contrasts Plato's view of being and good with Aristotle's teaching. Plato denies all three elements of the Aristotelian position: (i) there is no convertibility between being and good; (ii) "being" is not the first among the *communia*; and (iii) "being" and "good", taken in their generality, also exist in reality. The last difference is decisive and contradicts the transcendental interpretation of *ens* and *bonum* as having no extramental reality. The divergence can be accounted for by the kind of universality, upon which Plato bases himself. He does not understand the generality of being and good in the sense of a "logical" or "predicative" universality, according to which the more universal something is, the more potential (*potentialius*) it is. He takes their generality rather in the sense of a "theological" universality or that of "separation" (*universalitas theologica sive separationis*), according to which the more universal something is, the more actual (*actualius*) or active it is.[16]

The consequence of the Platonic view is that "being" and "good" are really and conceptually distinct from one another, since the "good", as the most universal cause of things, is prior, more universal and more absolute than "being". Berthold substantiates the primacy of the "good" by referring to two witnesses of the Platonic tradition: the Byzantine scholar Eustratius of Nicea, who, in his commentary on the *Ethics*, criticizes Aristotle's criticism of Plato's Idea of the Good and shows that the Good is *universalissimum* and *primum* because of its

[16] Berthold of Moosburg, *Expositio super Elementationem theologicam Procli*, prop. 11 A (ed. Pagnoni-Sturlese, p. 186): "Non sic autem accipiuntur ens et bonum apud Platonem, qui ponit utrumque etiam in sua universalitate acceptum esse in rerum natura. Non enim dicit ea esse universalia universalitate logica seu praedicationis, ubi, quanto aliquid est universalius, tanto est potentialius, sed ponit ea esse universalia universalitate theologica sive separationis, ubi, quanto aliquid est universalius, tanto est actualius ita, quod universalissimum est actualissimum". Cf. *ibid.*, prop. 1 A (pp. 73–74, ll. 90–105), where Berthold already introduces the opposition between *universalitas praedicationis* and *universalitas separationis,* between *universale logicum* and *universale theologicum.*

causality; and Dionysius the Areopagite, who, in his work *De divinis nominibus,* places the name 'good' before 'being'.[17]

The Platonic position consequently denies the convertibility of "being" and "good". Berthold quotes Aristotle's description of "priority" in the *Categories* (c. 12, 14a 34–35): one thing is prior to another "if the sequence of their being cannot be reversed". That is the case with the "good" in relation to "being". The good is the first cause of things, and the more causal something is, the more universal and prior it is. The most universal being, on the other hand, is the first *caused*, a claim asserted by the fourth proposition of the *Liber de causis*: "The first of created things is being".[18]

To sum up, Berthold understands Platonism and Aristotelianism as structures of thought that bear a formal likeness. Both philosophies intend a transcending movement towards the first and most general, but they part ways in the direction of the *transcensus* and in their identification of that which is first. The characteristic feature of the Aristotelian position is the transcendentality of the first, based on the "universality of predication". The most general in this respect is "being". The Platonic position is marked by the "transcendence" of the first, a term conveyed by Berthold's expression "universality of separation". This kind of universality results from the causality of a principle. That which is first and most general in this sense is the Good (or One) that remains "separated" from what is caused, that is, "being".

The distinction between what is first by the commonness of predication, "being", and what is first by the commonness of causality, "the

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[17] *Ibid.*, prop. 11 A (pp. 186–187): "Et per consequens dicit ens et bonum distingui ab invicem re et ratione seu intentione ita tamen, quod bonum sit prius, universalius, formalius et absolutius non solum ipso ente, sed etiam respectu omnium intentionum formalium sicut universalissima causa simpliciter omnium, sicut eleganter prosequitur Eustratius contra Aristotelem pro Platone super I *Ethicorum* cap. 4 (…). Idem vult dicere Dionysius 4 cap. *De divinis nominibus* (…)". Cf. W. Goris, "Das Gute als Ersterkanntes bei Berthold von Moosburg", in: W. Goris (ed.), *Die Metaphysik und das Gute. Aufsätze zu ihrem Verhältnis in Antike und Mittellater Jan A. Aertsen zu Ehren*, Leuven 1999 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales. Bibliotheca, 2), pp. 139–172.

[18] Berthold of Moosburg, *Expositio super Elementationem theologicam Procli*, prop. 11A (ed. Pagnoni-Sturlese, pp. 187–188): "Quanto autem aliquid est causalius, tanto est universalius et prius. Illud etiam secundum Aristotelem est prius, a quo non convertitur subsistendi consequentia. Sed bonum respectu entis est huiusmodi (…). Ex praedictis evidenter apparet differentia boni et entis secundum Platonicos, quia universalissimum bonum est prima causa, universalissimum ens primum causatum, sicut dicitur 4 prop. *De causis*".

good", is not new; it had been advanced in the Dionysius reception of the thirteenth century. Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas used this distinction in their attempts to integrate the Neoplatonic-Dionysian perspective into the transcendental way of thought, for they considered the two kinds of commonness as complementary.[19] Berthold ignores these thirteenth-century efforts and understands the Platonic and Aristotelian structures of thought as mutually exclusive. His commentary testifies to a Platonic reaction against the transcendental way of thought that had dominated medieval philosophy after 1250. Berthold's account aims at a criticism both of the ontological conception of metaphysics, since this conception appears to be based on a *universale logicum*, and of the doctrine of the transcendentals, because these basic notions are interpreted as having no being in extramental reality.

12.2 Nicholas of Cusa: Another *transcensus*

Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) presents a new type of 'transcensus' which implies another criticism of the doctrine of the transcendentals. He stands in the Neoplatonic tradition of a philosophy of the transcendent with his main authorities being Proclus and Dionysius the Areopagite, but his innovative views could be inspired by medieval predecessors.

It is exceptional in the fifteenth century that reference is made to the author we discussed in the preceding section, who maintained the superiority of Platonism and criticized "Aristotle's" transcendental philosophy. But Cusanus does this; he refers to Berthold of Moosburg's Proclus commentary (though he reproduces Berthold's name wrongly) and mentions his work in the same breath as the books of Dionysius the Areopagite.[20]

The collection of manuscripts in Cusanus's library in Bernkastel-Kues shows that he took a clear interest in two thinkers from the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century.

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[19] Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Ontology and Henology in Medieval Philosophy (Thomas Aquinas, Master Eckhart and Berthold of Moosburg)", in: E. P. Bos / P. A. Meyer (eds.), *On Proclus and His Influence in Medieval Philosophy*, Leiden 1992 (Philosophia Antiqua, 53), pp. 120–40.

[20] Nicholas of Cusa, *Apologia doctae ignorantiae* (ed. R. Klibansky, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. II, Hamburg 2007, pp. 29–30).

The first author is another representative of the "German Dominican School", Meister Eckhart; Nicholas possessed a copy of his writings which became the basis for the modern critical edition of Eckhart's Latin works. Distinctive of the Meister is his identification of transcendentality and transcendence; commonness and indistinction are the features of the divine.[21] Eckhart's conception could have influenced Cusanus's notion of *non-aliud*.

Of no other medieval author Cusanus's library contains such a large number of manuscripts as of Ramon Llull (1232–1316). His interest in this outsider in the university world also appears from the excerpts of Llull's works he made.[22] A Llullian doctrine that is relevant in view of Cusanus's transcending movement of thought is that of the *puncti transcendentes*. In the process of human knowledge of reality, "transcendent points" arise in two ways. The first mode occurs when one faculty exceeds another; in this way the intellect transcends by its own virtue the lower faculties in understanding the truth of things, which sense and imagination cannot attain. The first mode thus concerns the 'transcensus' of the sensible to the intelligible. A "transcendent point" arises in another way when the intellect transcends itself in its consideration of the truth of first cause, which it cannot attain in itself; the second mode concerns the 'transcensus' of what is intelligible to the divine. The intellect is moved to its self-transcendence through the experience of contradictions: for instance, the intellect affirms that the divine will is both immutable, because it is eternal, and mutable, because it loves one and the same person at one moment but not at another.[23]

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[21] Cf. for the influence of Eckhart's doctrine of the transcendentals, H. Wackerzapp, *Der Einfluß Meister Eckharts auf die ersten philosophischen Schriften des Nikolaus von Kues (1440–1450)*, Münster 1962 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 39/3), in particular pp. 17–41.

[22] Cf. E. Colomer, *Nikolaus von Kues und Raimund Llull aus Handschriften der Kueser Bibliothek*, Berlin 1961 (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie, 2).

[23] Ramon Llull, *Ars inventiva veritatis*, dist. 3, regula VIII: *De punctis transcendentibus* (ed. I. Salzinger, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. V, Mainz 1729 [reprinted in Frankfurt am Main 1965], pp. 47a–61b). *Declaratio Raimundi*, prol. (ed. Th. Pindl-Büchel, in: *Opera Latina*, Vol. XVII, Turnhout 1989 (Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis, 79), pp. 259–261): "(…) qui est secundum octavam regulam *Artis inuentiuae*, quae est de punhctis transcendentibus, uidelicet quod intellectus per suam uirtutem transcendat ad intelligendum rerum ueritates, quas potentiae, quae sub ipso sunt, attingere non possunt. (…) Est et alius modus punctorum transcendentium, uidelicet cum intellectus mediante gratia Dei supra se ipsum transcendit et in se ipso ueritatem

A good entrée into Cusanus's thought offers the writing *De venatione sapientiae* ("On the pursuit of wisdom"), in which he, at the end of his life, surveys the topics that have moved his mind. He describes ten "fields" (*campi*) that are most suitable for "the pursuit of wisdom".[24] Three of them in particular, namely "learned ignorance" (*docta ignorantia*), "unity" (*unitas*) and "not-other" (*non-aliud*), are instructive for the special nature of Cusanus's 'transcensus' and his critical attitude towards the tradition of transcendental thought.[25]

Docta ignorantia: *The* transcensus *towards the principle of coincidence*

1. The first field mentioned by Cusanus is the *docta ignorantia*, that he describes as the attempt to "grasp the incomprehensible incomprehensibly".[26] It also was the title of his first philosophical major work and is meant to express the limits of human reason. Human inquiry is always comparative; it proceeds by relating one thing that is known to another that is yet unknown. There does not exist, however, any proportion between the finite and infinite, which Nicholas calls "the root" (*radix*) of the "learned ignorance", and, consequently, truth in its precision is not attainable.[27] Understanding this fact, he formulates a new strategy for the ascent to the Infinite in *De docta ignorantia*.

Cusanus unfolds his method by departing from the nature of maximality (*maximitas*) or "that greater than which nothing can be". Notable is the explanatory remark that he adds: "But fullness (*abundantia*)

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primae causae et eius operationem attingit. Quam tamen in se ipso, uidelicet in sua natura, intelligere non potest. (…) Vnde ipse intellectus motus a contradictione praedicta et a simili supra suam naturam transcendit ad ~~in~~ intelligendum immutabilitatem summae uoluntatis, quamuis in uno tempore unum et eundem hominem diligit et in alio tempore non".

[24] Nicholas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, c. 11, n. 30 (ed. R. Klibansky / I. G. Senger, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XII, Hamburg 1982, p. 30).

[25] Cf. G. Federici Vescovini, "Nicolas de Cues et les transcendantaux", in: G. Federici Vescovini (ed.), *Le problème des transcendantaux du XIV^e^ au XVII^e^ siècle*, Paris 2002, pp. 103–120. H. G. Senger, "Warum es bei Nikolaus von Kues keine Transzendentalien gibt und wie sie kompensiert werden", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen*, Berlin-New York 2003 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 30), pp. 554–577.

[26] Nicholas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, c. 12, n. 31 (ed. Klibansky / Senger, p. 31).

[27] Nicholas of Cusa, *De docta ignorantia*, I, c. 2, n. 8 and c. 3, n. 9 (ed. E. Hoffmann / R. Klibansky, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. I, Hamburg 1932, pp. 8–9).

befits the one"—the idea is taken from Eckhart's description of the transcendental *unum*, which is a property of God. Cusanus concludes that unity, which is also the entity (*entitas*), coincides with maximality. If such unity is free from every contraction, obviously nothing is opposed to it, since it is the absolute maximality. Thus, the *maximum* is the absolute one which is all things, and all things are in it, for it is the *maximum*. According to the faith of all nations this *maximum* is God.[28]

We attain the absolutely *maximum* in no other way than incomprehensibly, for it is beyond all (*super omne*) that we can conceive. This follows from the nature of the *maximum*: because it is all what can be, it is altogether in act. Just as it cannot be greater, for the same reason it cannot be lesser, because it is all what can be. But the *minimum* is that which cannot be lesser. And since the *maximum* is this also, it is evident that the *minimum* coincides with the *maximum*.[29] Cusanus attempts to clarify this surprising conclusion by contracting the notions of *maximum* and *minimum* to the domain of quantity. The greatest quantity is maximally (*maxime*) great, the smallest quantity maximally small. If one frees *maximum* and *minimum* from quantity by taking away in thought 'great' and 'small', one will clearly see that the *maximum* and *minimum* coincide, for what remains is that both are a superlative. Opposite determinations belong only to those things which can be greater and smaller, but they do not at all befit the absolutely *maximum*, since it is above all opposition. Cusanus repeats that this transcends (*transcendit*) our understanding, which is incapable of combining opposites in their principle by way of reason (*via rationis*). Incomprehensibly, we see that the absolute *maximitas*, to which nothing is opposed and with which the *minimum* coincides, is infinite.[30]

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[28] *Ibid.*, c. 2, n. 5 (p. 7): "Tractaturus de maxima ignorantiae doctrina ipsius maximitatis naturam aggredi necesse habeo. Maximum autem hoc dico, quo nihil maius esse potest. Abundantia vero uni convenit. Coincidit itaque maximitati unitas, quae est et entitas; quod, si ipsa talis unitas ab omni respectu et contractione universaliter est absoluta, nihil sibi opponi manifestum est, cum sit maximitas absoluta. Maximum itaque absolutum unum est, quod est omnia; in quo omnia, quia maximum. (…) Hoc maximum, quod et Deus omnium nationum fide indubie creditur, (…)". Cf. Meister Eckhart, *Expositio libri Sapientiae*, n. 147 (in: *Die lateinischen Werke* [= LW], edited on behalf of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Stuttgart 1936–, Vol. II, p. 485).

[29] Nicholas of Cusa, *De docta ignorantia*, I, c. 4, n. 11 (ed. Hoffmann / Klibansky, p. 10).

[30] *Ibid.*, n. 11–12 (pp. 10–11).

Cusanus concludes his account through the notions of *maximum* and *minimum* with an interesting terminological remark: "'*Maximum*' and '*minimum*', as used in this book, are transcendent terms (*termini transcendentes*) of absolute signification in the sense that in their absolute simplicity they encompass all things—beyond every contraction to quantity of mass or of power".[31] Nicholas understands *maximum* and *minimum* as *termini transcendentes* and his explication of their transcendence sounds traditional: these terms are all-embracing, not contracted to "this" or "that". But the fact that Cusanus designates *maximum* and *minimum* as *termini transcendentes* is not traditional and has to be understood from his movement of thought to the Infinite.

The distinctive mark of Cusanus's *transcensus* consists in its orientation to the "coincidental" principle before every opposition. That this orientation is essential is apparent from the summary of the *transcensus*—the term used by Cusanus himself—in the epilogue of *De docta ignorantia*. He describes that his intention is "to grasp the incomprehensible incomprehensibly in *docta ignorantia* by the *transcensus* of the incorruptible truths that are knowable *humaniter*. (…) The whole effort of our human intelligence ought to be directed at raising itself to that simplicity where contradictories coincide".[32] Cusanus's doctrine of the coincidence of opposites is an innovation, although the author himself refers to Neoplatonic authorities.[33] There are some resemblances between Cusanus's *transcensus* and the doctrine of *puncti transcendentes* in Ramon Llull.[34] One of these "transcendent points" is the self-transcendence of the intellect in its consideration of the divine.

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[31] *Ibid.*, n. 12 (p. 11): "Maximum autem et minimum, ut in hoc libello sumuntur, transcendentes absolute significationis termini existunt, ut supra omnem contractionem ad quantitatem molis aut virtutis in sua simplicitate absoluta omnia complectantur".

[32] *Ibid.*, III, n. 263–264 (p 163): "(…) ad hoc ductus sum, ut incomprehensibilia incomprehensibiliter amplecterer in docta ignorantia, per transcensum veritatum incorruptibilium humaniter scibilium (…). Debet autem (…) omnis nostri humani ingenii conatus esse, ut ad illam se elevet simplicitatem, ubi contradictoria coincidunt".

[33] Cf. the instructive note on the sources of Cusanus's doctrine in the edition of *De beryllo*, adnotatio 2 (ed. I. G. Senger / C. Bormann, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XI/1, Hamburg 1988, pp. 93–100). See also the study by C. Steel, "Beyond the Principle of Contradiction? Proclus' 'Parmenides' and the Origin of Negative Theology", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen*, pp. 581–599.

[34] E. Colomer, *Nikolaus von Kues und Raimund Llull*, pp. 75–81.

But what is absent in Llull is the idea of a *transcensus* to the coincidental principle.

2. An important implication of the idea of "the coincidence of the opposites" was not stated in *De docta ignorantia*. But Cusanus acknowledges later, in a letter to the abbot of Tegernsee (dated 14.09.1453), that the principle of coincidence questions "the common principle of the entire philosophy (*principio communi totius philosophiae*), namely that two contradictory statements do not coincide".[35] His view was taken as a provocation that evoked fierce reactions. The theologian John Wenck from the University of Heidelberg, for instance, objected: "Such an assertion removes the seed of every doctrine, namely what is said in book IV of the *Metaphysics*: 'It is impossible that the same is and is not [at the same time]'".[36] Cusanus seems to deny the principle of contradiction, which Aristotle had called the "unconditional presupposition" (*anhypotheton*) of every rational discourse.

In his writing *Apologia doctae ignorantiae*, Nicholas rejects the reproach of a denial of this principle. The opponent has failed to notice that the "learned ignorance" concerns the domain of *intellectibilitas* and therefore leaves off every *ratiocinatio*. The distinction between intellect (*intellectus*) and reason (*ratio*) plays an essential role in Cusanus's apology. The mark of rationality is the discursivity, in which one thing is divided and distinguished from another. "Therefore in the field of reason (*in regione rationis*) the extremes are divided". It is quite different in the field of the intellect (*in regione intellectus*), since the intellect attains the unity in which the opposites coincide.[37] Cusanus's differentiation of the knowledge of the human mind in *ratio* and *intellectus* is not new, but he gives a new sense to it.

Aquinas, for instance, teaches that the human way of knowing occurs through a discursive process, which is typical of the *ratio*. Yet although the "rational" mode of knowing is proper to man, he participates in the immediate and simple knowledge of the intellect, since

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[35] For this letter, cf. E. Vansteenberghe, *Autour de la docte ignorance. Une controverse sur la théologie mystique au XV^e siècle*, Münster 1915 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, 14/2–4), pp. 113–117.

[36] E. Vansteenberghe (ed.), *Le "De ignota litteratura" de Jean Wenck de Herrenberg contre Nicolas de Cuse*, Münster 1910 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, 8/6), pp. 21–2: "Aufert eciam de medio talismodi eius assercio semen omnis doctrine, videlicet illud: Idem esse et non esse, IV *Metaphysicorum*".

[37] Nicholas of Cusa, *Apologia doctae ignorantiae* (ed. Klibansky, pp. 14–15).

intellectual knowledge is the principle and the terminus of the discursive process of reason.[38] Cusanus, however, extends the heterogeneity of the fields of reason and intellect to their respective principles. The principle of contradiction is the first principle of the discursive reason (*ratio discurrens*), not however of the intellect that sees (*intellectus videns*); the first for the latter is the principle of coincidence.[39] Cusanus does not reject the principle of contradiction *ex toto*, but limits its reach of application to the field of the finite; it is effective within the horizon of the *ratio*, that is, of the plurality and alterity.

Cusanus's *transcensus* to the coincidence principle and the implied relativization of the principle of contradiction has also consequences for the place of the doctrine of the transcendentals, since this doctrine is closely connected with the principle of contradiction.[40] Thomas Aquinas gives the first principle of theoretical knowledge a transcendental foundation by claiming that the principle "something cannot be and not be at the same time", which is first in the order of demonstration, is founded on the first concept of the intellect, "being". According to Duns Scotus the principle of contradiction requires the univocity of the concept of being as a condition of the transcendental science of metaphysics. Cusanus attacks this alliance between logic and metaphysics. If the coincidence of the opposites is accepted, the structure of metaphysics must change. His criticism of the doctrine of the transcendentals is advanced in two other fields of the "pursuit of wisdom", that of "unity" and of "not-other".

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[38] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De trinitate*, q. 6, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. L, Rome 1992, p. 162): "Sic ergo patet quod rationalis consideratio ad intellectualem terminatur secundum uiam resolutionis (…); et rursum intellectualis consideratio est principium rationalis secundum uiam compositionis uel inventionis".

[39] Nicholas of Cusa, *Apologia doctae ignorantiae* (ed. Klibansky, pp. 28): "Nec sequitur ex coincidentia etiam oppositorum in maximo (…) destructio seminis scientiarum, primi principii, ut impugnator elicit. Nam illud principium est quoad rationem discurrentem primum, sed nequaquam quoad intellectum videntem (…)".

[40] This aspect deserves more attention. Cf. the observations in J. A. Aertsen, "Der Satz vom Widerspruch in der mittelalterlichen Philosophie. Baron von Münchhausen, Thomas von Aquin und Nikolaus von Kues", in: K. Jacobi (ed.), *Argumentatiostheorie. Scholastischen Forschungen zu den logischen und semantischen Regeln korrekten Folgerns*, Leiden-New York-Köln 1993 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 38), pp. 707–727. R. Imbach, "*Primum principium*. Anmerkungen zum Wandel in der Auslegung der Bedeutung und Funktion des Satzes vom zu vermeidenden Widerspruch bei Thomas von Aquin, Nikolaus von Autrécourt, Heymericus de Campo und Nikolaus von Kues", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen*, pp. 600–616.

"Unity": Rejection of the convertibility with being

The sixth field in *De venatione sapientiae* is that of "unity".[41] Cusanus enumerates a number of authorities, whose reflections were directive for him. Prominence is given to Augustine, who wrote that the consideration of all philosophers is concerned with the one (*omnium philosophorum considerationem circa unum versari*). Boethius is next mentioned, and Cusanus ascribes the writing *De unitate et uno* to him (which in reality stems from the twelfth-century author Dominicus Gundissalinus). Both thinkers, Augustine and Boethius, followed Plato, who asserts that the One is the first principle of all things—a view that was also held by Proclus and Dionysius the Areopagite.[42]

This enumeration is one-sided, Aristotle, for instance, is ignored, although the entire tenth book of his *Metaphysics* deals with the one and many. It is, however, typical of Cusanus's own position, which is determined by central theses of the Neoplatonic doctrine of the one. The one, he states, precedes all things and seems to enfold (*complicare*) all things within itself. Without the one nothing remains in being, "for everything is insofar as it is one". That which is participates in the one; there cannot be a multitude that does not participate in unity. The one remains, however, absolutely transcendent: as cause of all things, the one itself is *nihil omnium*.[43] Cusanus's philosophy is "a thinking of the one", the designation with which Plotin characterizes his own thought, that is, a "henology".[44]

From this perspective Cusanus criticizes Aristotle's thesis of the convertibility of *ens* and *unum*. The "one", he argues, is more comprehensive (*capacius*) than "being", for it encompasses not only those

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[41] Nicholas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, c. 21–22 (ed. Klibansky / Senger, pp. 56–65). Cf. W. Beierwaltes, "Nicolaus Cusanus: Innovation durch Einsicht aus der Überlieferung—paradigmatisch gezeigt an seinem Denken des Einen", in: J. A. Aertsen / M. Pickavé (eds.), *"Herbst des Mittelalters". Fragen zur Bewertung des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*, Köln-New York 2004 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 31), pp. 351–370; id., *Denken des Einen. Studien zur neuplatonischen Philosophie und ihrer Wirkungsgeschichte*, Frankfurt 1985 (Philosophische Abhandlungen, 49).

[42] Nicholas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, c. 21, n. 59 (ed. R. Klibansky / Senger, pp. 56–57).

[43] *Ibid.* (p. 57); n. 61 (pp. 58–59); c. 22, n. 64 (p. 61).

[44] Cf. K. Flasch, *Die Metaphysik des Einen bei Nikolaus von Kues. Problemgeschichtliche Stellung und systematische Bedeutung*, Leiden 1973 (Studien zur Problemgeschichte der antiken und mittelalterlichen Philosophie, 7).

things which actually are but also those which can come into being.[45] He also adduces the reason that moves Plato to prefer the one to all things (*cunctis praeferendum*). The three degrees of perfection in things—being (*esse*), life (*vivere*), and understanding (*intelligere*)—do not include one another, but are encompassed by the one as the principle of all.[46] The one is not a property consequent upon being, but prior to it.

Cusanus had already discussed the convertibility thesis earlier in *De venatione sapientiae*, namely in chapter 8 that deals with the opposition between Plato and Aristotle. The Aristotelians did not agree with the Platonists that the good is *antiquius* than being; they maintained that *unum et ens et bonum* are convertible.[47] Cusanus's views on the priority of the one and the good show similarities with the criticisms that Berthold of Moosburg passed in his Proclus commentary on "Aristotle's" transcendental thought: there is no convertibility between being and the one or the good; "being" is not the first concept.

The priority of the "one" is expressed by Cusanus in a note in his copy of Proclus's *Parmenides* commentary, where he glosses in the margin: "The one is that which perfects and saves (*salvativum*) all beings, and all participate in the one, not, however, in being, life or understanding. Therefore the one is our concept for the first".[48] Nicholas adopts this priority in *De docta ignorantia*, when he completes his analysis of the learned ignorance with an investigation of the divine names.

It is evident, he observes, that no name can properly befit the *maximum*. For all names are imposed on the basis of some singularity, through which the *ratio* distinguishes one thing from another. But

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[45] Nicholas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, c. 21, n. 59 (ed. R. Klibansky / Senger, p. 57): "Complectitur [unum] autem tam ea quae sunt actu, quam ea quae possunt fieri"; n. 60 (p. 57): "Capacius est igitur unum quam ens, quod non est nisi actu sit, licet Aristoteles dicat ens et unum converti".

[46] *Ibid.*, n. 60 (p. 57).

[47] *Ibid.*, c. 8, n. 22 (p. 23): "Nec in hoc, quod bonum sit antiquius ente, [Peripatetici] concordant; unum et ens et bonum dicunt converti".

[48] Nicholas of Cusa, *Marginalia ad textum Proci Expositio in Parmenidem Platonis* (ed. K. Bormann, in: *Cusanus-Texte. III. Marginalien. 2. Proclus Latinus. Die Exzerpte und Randnoten des Nikolaus von Kues zu den lateinischen Übersetzungen der Proclus-Schriften. 2.2 Expositio in Parmenidem Platonis*, n. 606, Heidelberg 1986 (Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 3), p. 149): "unum perfectivum et salvativum omnium encium et omnia uno participant non sic de esse aut vita aut intellectu. ideo conceptum de primo vocamus unum".

where all things are one, there can be no proper name.[49] With this restriction Cusanus considers "unity" the more suitable name—a preference that was already implied in his attribution (I, c. 2) of the notion of "abundance", a property of (Eckhart's) *unum*, to the concept of *maximum*. But Cusanus immediately emphasizes that unity as divine name must not be taken in the way in which unity is usually understood. In the domain of the *ratio* plurality is always opposed to unity. An "intellectual" concept of "one" should be distinguished from the "rational" concept of "one". God befits a unity, to which neither otherness nor plurality is opposed. This is the *maximum* name, which enfolds all things in its simplicity of unity, and is above all understanding.[50]

Non-aliud: *Cusanus*'s transcensus *and the transcendentals*

1. The third field in *De venatione sapientiae* is that of *non-aliud*—a field that opens up a new perspective for Cusanus's *transcensus* to the coincidence principle. "Not-other" proves to be a special concept, for it defines not only itself but all things. When I ask: "What is not-other?", the most suitable answer will be: "The not-other is not other than the not-other". And when I ask: "What, then, is other?", it will be replied correctly that the other is not other than the other—the world, for instance, is not other than the world.[51]

What fascinates Nicholas in this field is the suitability of *non-aliud* as a concept for God. The intellect finds that God is not other with respect to an other, because he defines that other. Moreover, the not-other precedes the other. If not-other is removed, the other does not remain. For if the other is to exist (*esse*), it will have to be none other than the other. Otherwise it would be something other than other and hence would not be. Therefore, since the non-other is prior to the other (*ante aliud*), it cannot become other.[52]

Cusanus recognizes that the philosophers did not enter this field, in which, alone, negation is not opposed to affirmation. The not-other is not opposed to the other, since it defines this. In *De venatione sapien-*

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[49] Nicholas of Cusa, *De docta ignorantia*, I, c. 24, n. 74 (ed. E. Hoffmann / R. Klibansky, p. 48).
[50] *Ibid.*, n. 76 (p. 49).
[51] Nicholas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae*, c. 14, n. 40 (ed. R. Klibansky / Senger, p. 39).
[52] *Ibid.* (pp. 39–40).

tiae, he does not engage, however, in a fuller discussion of *non-aliud*, but refers to a work that he had devoted to this notion the year before (1462).[53]

The writing *Directio speculantis seu de non aliud* is a tetralogue, a discussion between four persons, two Platonists, an Aristotelian and Nicholas of Cusa, who represents the theology of Dionysius the Areopagite.[54] In this work Cusanus elaborates upon his discovery of *non-aliud* as a concept for God. Many names are attributed to the first principle, but the most adequate and accurate designation is *non-aliud*. What is first defines both itself and all others, for, as there is nothing prior to the first and as the first is independent of every thing posterior, it is assuredly defined only through itself. This condition is met by the concept of "not-other".[55] All theologians have attempted to express God's transcendence, either affirmatively by phrases with the prefix *super* ("he is supersubstantial") or by negations ("he is not-substantial substance"). But the name *non-aliud* is simpler (*simplicius*) and prior (*prius*); it is before (*ante*) every affirmation or negation. "Not-other" is, Nicholas confesses, that which for many years he sought through the idea of the "coincidence of the opposites".[56] *Non-aliud* is the new result of Cusanus's *transcensus* towards the coincidence principle.

The concept of the "not-other" is an innovation in the philosophy of the transcendent. Nicholas himself admits the originality of his view: when in the discussion in *De non aliud* he is asked by one of the interlocutors whether any thinker had openly expressed the idea of God as the "not-other", he replies that he has not read it anywhere. Cusanus suggests that Dionysius the Areopagite more than any other seems to have come close to it, when he maintains at the end of his *Mystical Theology* (c. 5) that "the creator is neither anything nameable nor any

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[53] *Ibid.*, n. 41 (pp. 40–41).

[54] Nicholas of Cusa, *Directio speculantis seu de non aliud* (ed. L. Baur / P. Wilpert, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XIII, Leipzig 1944). Cf. G. Schneider, *Gott—das Nichtandere. Untersuchungen zum metaphysischen Grunde bei Nikolaus von Kues*, Münster 1970 (Buchreihe der Cusanus-Gesellschaft, 4). J. Hopkins (transl.), *Nicholas of Cusa: On God as Not-other*, Minneapolis 1979. W. Beierwaltes, "Venatio sapientiae: Das Nicht-Andere und das Licht", in: W. A. Euler (ed.), *Nikolaus von Kues: De venatione sapientiae*, Trier 2010 (Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft, 32), pp. 83–104.

[55] Nicholas of Cusa, *Directio speculantis seu de non aliud*, c. 2 (ed. L. Baur / P. Wilpert, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XIII, Leipzig 1944, pp. 5–6).

[56] *Ibid.*, c. 4 (p. 9): "istud est, quod per oppositorum coincidentiam annis multis quaesivi, ut libelli multi, quos de hac speculatione conscripsi, ostendunt".

other thing (*aliud quid*)". But he rightly adds that Dionysius says this in such a way that he appears not to be setting forth any important point.[57] Later in *De non aliud*, Cusanus gives a significant explanation of Dionysius's statement: all things that can be understood by human knowledge are "something" (*aliquid*). Consequently, they are not God, for *aliquid* is "another what" (*quid aliud*).[58] One has to remember that in the Thomist tradition *aliquid* is a transcendental notion, expressing the division of one being from another. In Cusanus's view, however, the limited horizon of *aliquid* must be transcended towards the *non-aliud* of the divine.

Cusanus's doctrine of *non-aliud* could be inspired by Meister Eckhart's notion of *indistinctum*.[59] "Indistinct" is one of Eckhart's "basic terms" in the Work of Propositions: the title of treatise VIII is "The common and the indistinct, and their opposites, the proper and distinct". "Commonness" and "indistinction" are properties of God; "distinction" is the mark of the creature (see ch. 8.2.2). Cusanus was apparently struck by Eckhart's conception, for in his own copy of Eckhart's works he glosses in the margin: "Note how God is distinguished by his indistinction".[60]

2. The relation between Nicholas's concept of "not-other" and the transcendental notions is explicitly discussed in *De non aliud*. The Aristotelian interlocutor wonders how it is that *unum*, *ens*, *verum*, *bonum* exist subsequently (*post*) to "not-other".[61] In his reply, Cusanus goes through these traditional notions successively.

The fullest analysis concerns the position of *unum*, which seems very near (*propinquus*) to "not-other". Yet, since "one" is nothing other than one, it is other than "not-other". Therefore, "not-other" is simpler (*simplicius*) than "one", since "one" has from "not-other" that it is one, whereas the converse is not true.[62] Cusanus emphasizes

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[57] *Ibid.*, c. 1 (p. 5).
[58] *Ibid.*, c. 17 (p. 43).
[59] Cf. B. Mojsisch, *Meister Eckhart, Analogie, Univozität und Einheit*, Hamburg 1983, pp. 92–94.
[60] Cf. Meister Eckhart, *In Sapientiam*, n. 155 (LW II, p. 490, Nt. 5: "Nicolaus Cusanus in marg.: nota quomodo deus sua indistinctione distinguitur").
[61] Nicholas of Cusa, *De non aliud*, c. 4 (ed. L. Baur / P. Wilpert, p. 10).
[62] *Ibid.*: "Quamvis unum propinquum admodum ad 'non aliud' videatur, (…) nihilominus tamen unum, cum nihil aliud quam unum sit, aliud est ab ipso 'non aliud'. Igitur 'non aliud' est simplicius uno, cum ab ipso 'non aliud' habeat, quod sit unum; et non e converso".

the priority of *non-aliud* even in relation to the Neoplatonic doctrine of the one. "Some theologians"—reference is made to Proclus's *Parmenides* commentary and to Dionysius the Areopagite—have accepted the notion of "one" in place of "not-other" in the sense that they regarded "one" as prior to any contradiction. However, since "one" is other than "not-other", it does not at all direct us to the first principle of all. This principle cannot be different (*aliud*) from any other thing or from nothing, because it is likewise not the opposite (*contrarium*) of anything.[63] Cusanus's position means a correction of the "henology", insofar as even the "intellectual" concept of "one" can be transcended, which at the same time is a self-correction with regard to his concept of God in *De docta ignorantia*. In his account of the field of "unity" in *De venatione*, too, Cusanus points out that unity is seen to be near to "not-other", but that the latter notion precedes unity.[64]

He next claims that the precedence of *non-aliud* also holds for the notions *ens*, *verum* and *bonum*. It applies to "being": although the "not-other" shines clearly forth in "being", since "being" seems to be the less other to something in things that are, nevertheless "not-other" precedes it. The case is the same for *verum* (which is similarly not denied of any being) and for *bonum* (even though nothing is found to be deprived of the good).[65] *Non-aliud* always precedes, a precedence that follows from the radicalization of Cusanus's *transcensus*.

His account has several remarkable aspects. First, he explicitly recognizes the universal extension of the transcendental notions in his descriptions of "true" and "good" ("nothing is deprived of the good"). The suggestion of an "elimination" of the doctrine of the transcendentals in Cusanus's thought seems too strong.[66] Their meaning is rather relativized, insofar as they are transcendable—a criticism that likewise holds for the Neoplatonic henology. What is further striking is Cusanus's theologically motivated interest in these notions. All of

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[63] *Ibid.*

[64] Nicholas of Cusa, *De venatione sapientiae* c. 21, n. 59 (ed. R. Klibansky / Senger, p. 57).

[65] Nicholas of Cusa, *Directio speculantis seu de non aliud*, c. 4 (ed. L. Baur / P. Wilpert, p. 10): "Eodem modo de ente considera; nam etsi in ipso 'non aliud' clare videatur elucere, cum eorum, quae sunt, aliud ab aliquo minime videatur: tamen ipsum 'non aliud' praecedit.—Sic de vero, quod quidem similiter de nullo ente negatur, et bono, licet nihil boni expers reperiatur".

[66] H. G. Senger, "Warum es bei Nikolaus von Kues keine Transzendentalien gibt und wie sie kompensiert werden", p. 569.

them "are taken as obvious names of God, even though they do not attain precision (*praecisio*)".[67] Cusanus repeats this critical observation of a lack of "precision" in a later chapter in *De non aliud*, dealing with *bonum* as predicate of God. "Good" befits the first principle, but "not-other" is predicated in a more precise way (*praecisius*), because it defines itself and the good, for the good that is said of the principle is not another.[68]

What lastly deserves attention is the way in which Cusanus returns to the question which provoked his account: how are the transcendental notions subsequent (*post*) to the "not-other"? He admits that the model of *ante* and *post* could be misleading. If the transcendental notions were subsequent (*post*) to *non-aliud*, how would any of them be no other than what it is? Therefore, the "not-other" is before (*ante*) the transcendentals, not in the sense that these are subsequent (*post*) to it but in the sense that they are through (*per*) it. The relation of *non-aliud* to the transcendental notions is a relation of foundation. The Aristotelian opponent concludes that the priority of "not-other" does not exclude its immanence in the transcendentals. The claim that the *non-aliud* is seen before (*ante*) all things means that it cannot be absent from any of the things which are seen after (*post*) it, even if these things are contradictories.[69]

It has been suggested that Cusanus's notion of "not-other" signifies a "supertranscendental" concept, a determination that is the condition of all transcendentals.[70] The phrase "supertranscendental" has some legitimation, insofar as the *non-aliud* transcends and founds the transcendental notions. It is, however, not a "supertranscendental" concept in the sense of the sixteenth-century doctrine of the supertranscen-

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[67] Nicholas of Cusa, *Directio speculantis seu de non aliud*, c. 4 (ed. L. Baur / P. Wilpert, p. 10): "Sumuntur quoque ob id omnia haec pro apertis Dei nominibus, tametsi praecisionem non attingant".

[68] *Ibid.*, c. 23 (p. 55).

[69] *Ibid.*, c. 4 (p. 10): "Non tamen proprie dicuntur illa post 'non aliud' esse; si enim forent post 'non aliud', quomodo eorum quodlibet esset non aliud quam id, quod est? Sic igitur 'non aliud' ante ista videtur et alia, quod post ipsum non sunt, sed per ipsum. Recte igitur tu quidem miratus es de hiis, quae 'non aliud' antecedit, si post ipsum sunt, et quonam modo id possibile". [Ferdinandus.] "Si recte te capio, ita 'non aliud' videtur ante omnia, quod ex hiis, quae post ipsum videntur, nullis abesse possit, si quidem etiam sunt contradictoria".

[70] Cf. J. Stallmach, "Das 'Nichtandere' als Begriff des Absoluten. Zur Auswertung der mystischen Theologie des Pseudo-Dionysius durch Cusanus", in: *Universitas. Dienst an Wahrheit und Leben. Festschrift für Bischof Dr. Albert Stohr*, Vol. I, Mainz 1960, pp. 329–335, here p. 330.

dentals, because the orientation of Cusanus's *transcensus* towards the coincidence principle is quite different from the idea that motivated the introduction of the doctrine of the supertranscendentals, such as "intelligible". These concepts "transcend" the transcendental notions, since they are common not only to real being but also to being of reason (see ch. XV).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRANSCENDENTALS IN RENAISSANCE PHILOSOPHY

The philosophical literature of the Italian Renaissance offers two texts that propose a reorientation of the doctrine of the transcendentals. The texts reflect the different tendencies in the Renaissance concept of philosophy.[1] One tendency is the "linguistic" turn, the critique of Scholastic philosophy from the perspective of grammar, rhetoric and ordinary language. This tendency determines the argumentation in a writing of Lorenzo Valla, the *Dialecticae disputationes* or *Repastinatio dialectice et philosophie*, in which he critically examines the basic notions of philosophy or the transcendentals (13.1). Another tendency in Renaissance thought is the idea of the *concordia* of philosophy, which is obvious in the treatise *De ente et uno* of Pico della Mirandola. Against Neoplatonic criticisms of "Aristotle's" transcendental philosophy Pico wants to show that Plato's and Aristotle's statements about "being" and "one" concord (13.2).

13.1 Lorenzo Valla: "Reform" of the doctrine: *Res* as the king (*rex*) of the transcendentals

A typical exponent of Renaissance thought is the philosophical main work of Lorenzo Valla (ca. 1406–1457), the *Dialecticae disputationes*. In these disputations, Valla intends a reform of the foundations of philosophy, an intention that comes to expression in the titles of the three versions of the work. He aims at a "re-ploughing" (*repastinatio*: the title of the first version, ca. 1439), a "repair" (*reconcinnatio*: the

[1] Cf. C. Vasoli, "The Renaissance Concept of Philosophy", in: Ch. B. Schmitt / Q. Skinner / E. Kessler (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, Cambridge 1988, pp. 57–74. B. Pinchard (ed.), *Fine follie ou la catastrophe humaniste. Etudes sur les transcendantaux à la Renaissance*, Paris 1995 (Le savoir de Mantice, 1).

title of the second version) and a "revision" (*retractatio*: the title of the third version).[2]

His critical inquiry starts in the first book with the primordial principles (*primordia*) of traditional philosophy. These are twofold, namely the Aristotelian categories and the principles, which are called *transcendentia* because they transcend the highest genera. The transcendentals are six in number: "being" (*ens*), "something", "thing", "one", "true" and "good"—the number of six always betrays influence of Aquinas's account of the transcendentals in *De veritate*; Valla was well-acquainted with Thomas's work. The latter *primordia* are the higher principles, since each of the categories is *ens*, *aliquid*, *res*, *unum*, *verum*, *bonum*, and are therefore regarded, according to Valla, as the "princes of princes" (*principum principes*) and as the "emperors" and "kings".[3]

Valla does not actually deal with the philosophical meaning of the transcendental *primordia*, but is interested in one specific problem, the plurality of these notions. He claims that there must not be a plurality of kings or emperors but that one king suffices, since solely the "monarchy" (lit. "rule by one") is good, as Odysseus says in Homer (*Ilias* II, 204–205). Valla will therefore investigate which among the six transcendentals is the *imperator* and *rex*, that is, which has the

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[2] The different versions were edited by G. Zippel in two volumes: *Lorenzo Valla, Repastinatio dialectice et philosophie*, Vol. I: *Retractatio totius dialectice cum fundamentis universe philosophie* [contains the third version and variant readings from the second version]; Vol. II: *Repastinatio dialectice et philosophie* [contains the first version], Padova 1982 (Thesaurus Mundi. Bibliotheca Scriptorum Latinorum Mediae et Recentioris Aetatis, 21–22).

[3] Lorenzo Valla, *Retractatio*, I, c. 1, n. 1–2 (ed. Zippel, Vol. I, p. 8): "Ea que dixi primordia, video duplicia fieri. Una, que 'categorie' appellantur (…)"; n. 8 (pp. 10–11): "Altera, 'primordia' atque 'principia' que isti 'transcendentia' appellant quod transcendant illa summa genera (…)"; n. 9 (p. 11): "Ea numero sex esse dicuntur: 'ens', 'aliquid', 'res', 'unum', 'verum', 'bonum'. Que quoniam sunt altiora principia et velut principum principes et quasi (ut istis videtur) quidam imperatores er reges (quia singula predicamenta sunt 'ens', sunt 'aliquid', sunt 'res', sunt 'unum', sunt 'verum', sunt 'bonum'), de his prius ordine ipso dicendum est". For Valla's doctrine of the transcendentals, cf. M. Laffranchi, "L'interpretazione 'retorica' del linguaggio dei trascendentali in Lorenzo Valla", in: A. Ghisalberti (ed.), *Dalla prima alla seconda Scolastica. Paradigmi e percorsi storiografici*, Bologna 2001 [= *Divus Thomas* 27 (2000)], pp. 167–199. F. M. Zini, "Lorenzo Valla et la réflexion sur la *Res*", in: id. (ed.), *Penser entre les lignes. Philologie et philosophie au Quattrocento*, Villeneuve d'Ascq 2001 (Cahiers de Philologie. Série Apparat Critique, 19), pp. 275–291. L. Nauta, *In Defence of Common Sense. Lorenzo Valla's Humanist Critique of Scholastic Philosophy*, Cambridge, Mass. – London 2009, pp. 48–81.

most comprehensive (*capacissima*) signification.[4] It is striking that he does not refer for the identity of goodness and unity to a philosophical authority, although this is a Neoplatonic basic issue and has been maintained, for instance, by Boethius in his *Consolation of Philosophy*, but refers to Homer.

The plurality of the transcendentals has been a fixed element of the doctrine since its beginning in Philip the Chancellor. This plurality does not concern distinct entities, which Valla's interpretation in terms of "six kings" or "emperors" could suggest, but concerns different formalities (the Scotist tradition) or the different ways in which what is most common can be conceived. According to the Scholastic view there exists an order among the *communissima* in the sense that one of them possesses a conceptual priority with respect to the others. But this does not imply that the notions coming after the *primus inter pares* lose their transcendental character. In Valla's view, however, the notions that are not the king lose the royal dignity of a transcendental. His *retractatio* of the doctrine is a reduction.

The resolution of "being" to "thing"

Valla's account concentrates the question of the priority on the relation between "being" (*ens*) and "thing" (*res*). He observes that the Peripatetics want to attribute the priority to "being", but he rejects this position and maintains that "of the six [principles] that now, as it were, contest the rule, thing (*res*) will be the king in the same way as of the six Persians, who contested the rule, Darius, the son of Hystapis, became the king".[5] The phrasing of Valla's second claim continues the king metaphor of his first claim, solely the "monarchy" is good, but what the sense of the curious comparison with the Persian king is, he explains only later in the chapter.

In the history of the doctrine of the transcendentals, the priority of "being" is closely connected with an onto-logical conception of metaphysics and is explained from the relation of the subject of a science to

[4] Lorenzo Valla, *Retractatio*, I, c. 2, n. 1 (ed. Zippel, Vol. I, p. 11): "Iam primum non plures esse debere imperatores ac reges sed unum, vel sua sponte manifestum est: ut apud Homerum Ulysses (…). Ergo quod ex his vocabulum, sive que vocabuli significatio sit omnium imperator et rex, idest omnium capacissima (…), inquiramus".

[5] *Ibid.*, n. 2 (pp. 11–12): "Apud me autem ex his sex que nunc quasi de regno contendunt, non aliter 'res' erit rex, quam Darius Hystapis filius futurus rex erat ex illis sex Persis, qui regnum sorti permisere".

its proper attributes (*propria*). This metaphysical framework is absent from Valla's account. His analysis is quite different from the Scholastic discussions on the primacy of *ens* or *res* in Henry of Ghent or Duns Scotus. Typical of Valla's approach are the authors to whom he appeals in his argumentation: Priscianus (*Institutiones grammaticae*), Horatius, Cicero, Quintilianus (*Institutio oratoria*). Valla's analysis of the *primordia* is marked by the (humanist) "linguistic" turn; his considerations are mainly grammatical or based on ordinary language, that is, for Valla, classical Latin. His analysis of "being" illustrates this tendency.

Ens is by its nature a participle of every gender, but has a peculiarity in common with some other participles, such as *contingens* (and, we could add, *transcendens*). It is solely neuter when used as a substantive noun, which is expressed in Greek through the addition of an article: *to on*. Yet the signification of the noun '*ens*' becomes clear from the participle "being". Every participle has the force of a relative and a verb: "running" (*currens*) means "he who runs (*is qui currit*)'. Similarly "being" (*ens*) can be resolved into "that which is" (*id quod est*), the pronoun "that" (*id*) being always presupposed, even when it is not explicated. Valla's next step is to show that the substantivized pronoun signifies 'thing'. When we say, "distinguish 'this' (*hoc*) or 'that' (*istud*)", what is signified is "this thing" (*hec res*) or "that thing" (*ista res*). Likewise, *aliquid* is *aliqua res*, *aliud* is *alia res*, *idem* is *eadem res*, *nihil* is *nulla res*. The same applies to 'being': after the resolution of *ens* into "that which is" (*id quod est*), it can be further resolved into "that thing which is" (*ea res que est*).[6]

Valla concludes that it is evident that the word 'being' does not have a universal force of its own, but that its force is wholly borrowed from 'thing'.[7] Besides this grammatical analysis he advances other arguments against the primacy of "being". Statements in terms of "being" are laborious: Take, for instance, the sentence "a stone is a being" (*lapis est ens*), which is reducible to "a stone is that thing which is" (*lapis est ea res, que est*). But what sense do the words "that which is"

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[6] *Ibid.*, n. 4–11 (pp. 12–14); n. 11: "Igitur si 'ens' ita resolvitur: 'id quod est', et 'id' resolvitur 'ea res', profecto 'ens' resolvetur: 'ea res que est' ".

[7] *Ibid.*, n. 12 (p. 14): "Quo palam est, omnem vim non naturalem habere, sed, ut sic dicam, precariam ac mutuo sumptam". Cf. *Repastinatio*, I, c. 2, n. 9 (ed. Zippel, Vol. II, p. 369): "Quare quis non videt 'ens' non habere suapte natura aliquam universalem vim, sed omnem mutuari ab illo 'res'?"

(*ea que est*) make, if it is clearer, simpler and more convenient to say that "a stone is a thing" (*lapis est res*)? Moreover, the additional phrase "that which is" cannot be properly said of a stone, because the Bible teaches us that only God truly "is" and that in comparison to him all other things "are" not in the proper sense (*proprie*). If, therefore, it is said of some thing other than God that it is an *ens*, this mode of speaking is inappropriate—this was the reason, Valla suggests, that the most prominent Latin authors repudiated the term.[8]

There is no longer any struggle between the transcendentals about the rule (*de regno controversia*), but the other five—*aliquid*, *ens*, *unum*, *verum*, *bonum*—honor *res* as "the king" (*rex*). Valla resumes his king metaphor by alluding to a story, reported by Herodotus in his *Historiae* (III, 86), a work that Valla had translated into Latin. Six Persians contested the empire, but when Darius managed to become the king of the Persians, the other five descended from their horses and rendered homage to the king. Similarly the other five transcendentals descend in order to give the (royal) dignity of a transcendental to *res*.[9]

Valla observes that we use "thing" everywhere as a general term, but that *res* can also have a more specific meaning. It is employed by the classical writers or in ordinary language as a term signifying a state or condition, dispute, business, acts, powers, etc. "One should not be surprised", he assures, "that one term has so many special significates, since it contains all significates in general".[10] Valla suggests that if Aristotle, who usually employs the term *to on*, had noticed the force and nature of the term *pragma*, he certainly would have preferred the latter term.[11] Apparently, Valla considers *pragma* the equivalent of the Latin *res*, but as a matter of fact the philosophical antecedents of *res* are in Arab, not in Greek thought (see ch. 2.4.2).

"One" and "true"

The question of the transcendental status of "one", "true" and "good" is not explicitly addressed by Valla. His account as a whole is rather disappointing and does not realize a *retractatio* of the doctrine. Yet

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[8] Lorenzo Valla, *Retractatio*, I, c. 2, n. 13–14 (ed. Zippel, Vol. I, pp. 14–15).

[9] *Ibid.*, n. 16 (p. 15).

[10] *Ibid.*, n. 17–21 (pp. 15–14); n. 21 (p. 17): "Neque mirandum tot significata unam vocem habere specialia, cum omnia significata generaliter contineat".

[11] *Ibid.*, n. 22 (p. 18).

some of his brief remarks deserve attention, since they are characteristic of his philosophical approach.

1. Valla criticizes Aristotle's view that "one" is not a number but the "principle" of number, "as if the principles of things were not parts of the thing and, consequently, the thing itself". Whoever reads the beginning (*principium*) of the book, reads the book; whoever touches the head of a man, touches the man; whoever sees the beginning (*initium*) of a pond, sees the pond. The assumption of Valla's reasoning that "principle" is identical with (spatio-temporal) "beginning" is questionable, because the "principle" of a book is not necessarily its beginning, but a first that dominates the rest. To his mind, however, expressions such as "the beginning of a book" or "the beginning of a pond" do not refer to sophisteries but "to the usage (*usus*) of men, which is the 'autor' (*auctor*) of words".[12]

Valla's critique of Aristotle through an appeal to "ordinary" language is at the same time a critique of philosophy. Daily life confirms that "one" is counted as a number. Valla adduces the example of two housewives dividing eggs amongst each other and taking "one" as the first uneven number. "So they sometimes have a better understanding of the meaning of words than the most excellent philosophers: the former relate words to the usage (*ad usum*), the latter to a game (*ad lusum*)".[13]

2. Truth properly is, according to Valla, "science or knowledge (*scientia sive notitia*) of whatever thing"; it is, as it were, "the light of the mind". The proper place of truth is the mind, but the various conceptions of truth in the thirteenth and fourteenth century show that such a view does not necessarily exclude the transcendentality of the true. One would therefore expect Valla to turn against the ontological conception of truth, but his argument appears to have another adversary.

It is directed against a Platonic figure of thought, which suggests that the light of the mind, which is truth, is not an inner light, but comes from outside "like solar light". Valla has Plato's analogy of the sun in mind, implying that just as the sun renders things visible in the

[12] *Ibid.*, n. 25 (p. 18).
[13] *Ibid.*, n. 26 (p. 19).

material world, God renders things intelligible in the immaterial world. Valla refers to Plato's *Republic*, which had become available in a Latin translation in his time, but he adds to this reference that Plato proposes the analogy "somewhat differently"; indeed the Platonic analogy is concerned with the proportionality between the sun and the Idea of the Good (not: God). Valla argues that the proper locus of truth and falsity is the mind. "When we affirm that something is true or false, this certainly refers to the mind of the speaker, because in it is truth or falsity". Plato's analogy between God/truth and the sun/light must be reinterpreted in the sense that God is the source (*fons*) of the truth in our mind, just as the sun is the source of our (physical) light.[14]

Valla recognizes that the predicates 'true' and 'false' can also be applied to things, but immediately distances himself from this application by the remark "as if there were truth in them". When one says, for instance, "I have found the truth of the thing", this statement does not have any ontological import and means nothing else than "I have come to knowledge of the thing".[15] "True" is not a property of things and cannot be given the dignity of a transcendental.

Thing and transcendence

Later in the first book of the *Retractatio*, in his account of the relationship between words and things, Valla returns to the unique position of *res*. "Whatever we say", he states, "are words (*vocabula*): even 'substance' itself, 'quality', 'action', and what is more 'thing' (*res*)"; substance has the name 'substance', quality 'quality', action 'action', and lastly thing 'thing'.[16] The examples Valla gives are the most general categorial terms and the transcendental term *res*. He next elaborates upon the transcendentality of "thing".

"So 'thing' signifies thing, being a word or sign, while thing is not a word but is that which is signified". Since 'thing' is a word, it can be defined as follows: "'thing' is a sound or word, embracing (*complectens*) the significations of all words in its own (signification)". This definition causes an obvious objection to the generality of "thing". If "thing" is defined by the term 'word' and a definition occurs through a more general term, it seems that 'word' is "above" (*supra*) 'thing'.

[14] *Ibid.*, n. 28–30 (pp. 19–20).
[15] *Ibid.*, n. 31 (p. 20).
[16] *Ibid.*, c. 14, n. 23 (p. 123).

Valla denies that 'word' is more general than 'thing'. The signification of 'thing' is "above" the signification of 'word', since 'thing' refers to all things while 'word' solely refers to words, a subclass of things.[17]

In the next passage, Valla makes an obscure and problematic comparison with the word 'God':

> That word [*sc*. 'thing'] signifies all things, just as this word 'God' is below many others, since 'spirit' transcends (*transcendit*) it, 'substance' transcends it, 'essence' transcends it, and 'something' (*aliquid*) and 'thing' (*res*) transcend it. However, in dignity of signification, 'God' transcends (*transcendit*) all others, because he is the author (*auctor*) of all other things.[18]

What is exactly the point of comparison between 'thing' and 'God'? Valla does not explain his reasoning, but his intention is the clarification of the special position of *res*. 'Thing' and 'God' have in common that both terms imply a transcending movement. They express, however, different senses of transcendence. The signification of 'thing' is universal; as referring to all things, *res* is the only transcendental; it expresses a *semantic* transcendence. The transcendence of the word 'God' is based on the *dignity* of its signification; it expresses a *causal* transcendence, since it refers to the "author" of all things.

13.2 Pico della Mirandola: *De ente et uno*

The Renaissance philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) published a small treatise that is devoted to the transcendental notions of "being" and "one".[19] His work *De ente et uno* has a number of remarkable aspects: (i) The transcendentals "being" and "one"

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[17] *Ibid.*, n. 24 (pp. 123–124).

[18] *Ibid.* (p. 124): "Illa autem vox omnes res significat, quemadmodum hec vox 'Deus' infra multas alias est. Nam illam transcendit 'spiritus', transcendit 'substantia', transcendit 'essentia', transcendit 'aliquid' et 'res'; significationis autem dignitate cuncta alia transcendit, cum sit ipse ceterarum rerum auctor".

[19] Pico della Mirandola, *De ente et uno* (ed. and transl. O. Boulnois / G. Tognon, in: Jean Pic de la Mirandole, *Oeuvres philosophiques*, Paris 1993, pp. 74–135). Cf. O. Boulnois, "La concorde et la métamorphose. Transcendance et convertibilité des transcendantaux chez Pic de la Mirandole", in: B. Pichard (ed.), *Fine Follie ou la catastrophe humaniste*, pp. 85–99. S. Toussaint, *L'esprit du Quattrocento. Le 'De Ente et Uno' de Pic de la Mirandole*, Paris 1995. Engl. translation of the treatise in: *Pico della Mirandola, [Selections] On Being and the One* (transl. P. J. W. Miller), Indianapolis-Cambridge 1998, pp. 35–62.

and their convertibility mark the Aristotelian inspiration of the rise of the doctrine in the thirteenth century and its anti-Platonic tendency. But in the prologue, Pico immediately indicates that his focus will not be, as it was usual in Neoplatonic critiques (see ch. XII), the opposition between Aristotle's and Plato's views on "being" and "one", but the *concordia* of their positions. (ii) In the discussion of the Platonic argument that God is "one" but not "being", he gives a differentiated analysis of the relation of the divine transcendence to the transcendental concepts by distinguishing four degrees (*gradus*) in the ascent to God. (iii) The treatise develops into an account of the *transcendentia* in general, an account that is rare in Renaissance philosophy. (iv) In the last chapter of *De ente et uno*, Pico calls attention to the moral dimension of the transcendental notions.

Concord of Plato and Aristotle

1. The treatise *De ente et uno* (published in 1491) must be read against the background of a huge project that Pico had launched a few years before (1486), the defence of 900 *Conclusiones* (or "Theses") in a public disputation in Rome. His *Conclusiones* are divided into 400 "Theses according to the opinions of others" and 500 "Theses according to his own opinion". The first, historical part shows the breadth of Pico's philosophical interest. Striking is his attention for what contemporaries call "the barbarian philosophers (*barbari philosophi*)" of the Middle Ages; the first section states more than 100 "Theses according to the doctrines of the Latin philosophers and theologians: Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Francis of Meyronnes, Duns Scotus, Henry of Ghent and Giles of Rome". In addition to theses of the Arab philosophers, the Greek commentators of Aristotle, the Platonists from Plotin to Proclus, the first part also contains theses of the Jewish Cabbala.[20]

The second part of the *Conclusiones*, presenting theses *secundum opinionem propriam*, starts with "paradoxical reconciliative theses", of which the first one is typical of Pico's entire project: "There is no natural or divine question in which Aristotle and Plato do not agree in meaning and substance, although in their words they seem to

[20] Cf. A. Biondi (ed.), *Conclusiones nongentae. Le novecento Tesi dell' anno 1486*, Florence 1995 (Studi Pichiani, 1). S. A. Farmer, *Syncretism in the West: Pico's 900 Theses (1486)*, with Text, Transl. and Commentary, Tempe, Ariz., 1998 (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 167).

disagree".[21] In the famous address that was meant as opening of the disputation and came to be called "Oration on the Dignity of Man" (*De dignitate hominis*), Pico underlines that his primary aim is the *concordia* of Plato and Aristotle, which in Latin philosophy Boethius had promised to prove, but never achieved.[22] Pico's intention to reconcile philosophical oppositions is not restricted to the two antagonists of Greek philosophy, but likewise applies to Aquinas and Duns Scotus in Latin philosophy, and to Avicenna and Averroes in Arab philosophy—philosophical views that seem to be conflicting concord.

The project ended in a complete failure; the disputation never took place, and a number of Pico's (theological) theses were condemned by the pope. But the principal idea of the project, the idea of the *concordia*, made itself felt in the treatise *De ente et uno* that Pico composed some years later.

2. In the prologue, Pico describes what occasioned the composition of the treatise. A friend has summoned his help in a disputation about being and one: How is Aristotle to be defended against the arguments (*rationes*) of the Platonists? Pico promises his cooperation, but clearly indicates the scope of his assistance: "Those who think that Aristotle dissents from Plato dissent from me, for I make the philosophy of both concordant" (*concordem utriusque facio philosophiam*). His intention is, therefore, not only to defend Aristotle in this matter but also to show how he agrees with his master Plato. Pico adds that the present treatise must be seen as a part of a more encompassing work he was preparing (but never realized), *The Concord of Plato and Aristotle*.[23]

The Neoplatonic criticisms of the doctrine of the transcendentals oppose Aristotle's ontology, in which being and one are convertible and have the same extension (*ambitus*), to the henology of the Platonists, according to which one is prior (*prius*) to being in the sense

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[21] Pico della Mirandola, *Conclusiones secundum opinionen propriam*, n. 1 (ed. Biondi, p. 62; ed. Farmer, p. 364): "Nullum est quaesitum naturale aut divinum, in quo Aristoteles et Plato sensu et re non consentiant, quamvis verbis dissentire videantur".

[22] Pico della Mirandola, *De dignitate hominis* (ed. Boulnois / Tognon, p. 52): "Proposuimus primo Platonis Aristotelisque concordiam (…). Boethius, apud Latinos id se facturum polliticus, non invenitur fecisse unquam quod semper facere voluit".

[23] Pico della Mirandola, *De ente et uno*, prol. (ed. Boulnois / Tognon, p. 74).

that one is more simple (*simplicius*) and common (*communius*).[24] Pico will take the edge off this opposition in several ways.

He first examines what Plato himself has explicitly stated about the question. This is a new approach in comparison to the method of Berthold of Moosburg and Nicholas of Cues; Plato is not read through the eyes of Proclus/Dionysius but is interpreted through an exegesis of his works. Pico establishes that in two texts Plato has discussed "being" and "one", in the *Sophistes* and in the *Parmenides*, which is not, as a contemporary Neoplatonist, Marsilio Ficino, suggests, an account of the Platonic theology, but a purely "dialectical exercise". Pico's reading concludes that Plato's statements support the view that "one" and "being" are equal (*aequale*) rather than that "one" is higher (*superius*) to "being".[25]

He next attempts to explain how the different doctrinal statements made by Platonists and Aristotle are possible and maintains that both the assertion that nothing is more common than being and the assertion that there is something above being is true. The crux is that the term "being" (*ens*) can be taken in two "modes". The first mode of "being" is "that which is outside nothing (*extra nihil*)". Consequently, "being" encompasses all things, and the statement that there is not anything "more common" (*communius*) than "being" is the truest affirmation. This mode of being is "the foundation" of Aristotle's philosophy; he takes "being" in this sense, when he claims that "being" and "one" are equal and convertible with one another. But this meaning is not exclusively Aristotelian, for Dionysius the Areopagite will not deny that "being" is a divine name.[26]

Yet it is also true to say that something is above (*supra*) "being". Pico accounts for this other "mode" through the distinction of abstract and concrete names. An abstract noun (for instance, "light") signifies that which is a perfection or form by itself (*a se*), a concrete noun (for instance, "luminous") signifies that which is such thanks to another. If this distinction is applied to the terminology of being, it means that

[24] *Ibid.*, c. 1 (pp. 76–78): "Aristoteles multis in locis respondere haec sibi invicem et aequali esse ambitu dicit, unum scilicet et ens (…). Resistit Academia cui placet unum esse prius ente; prius autem cum dicunt et simplicius intelligi volunt et communius".

[25] *Ibid.*, c. 2 (pp. 78–84).

[26] *Ibid.*, c. 3 (pp. 84–88).

ens or "that which is" has the aspect of a *concretum* and is said to participate in being (*esse*), whereas *esse* is an *abstractum*, which is not an *ens*, since it is *a se* and *ex se*. Such an *esse* is God, who is the fullness of being, by the participation of which all things are. For this reason it can truly be said that God is not an *ens*, but "above" "being" and that there is something higher than "being". Since God is given the name "one", the Academics think that *unum* is "above being" (*supra ens*). This claim, however, is not exclusively Platonic. Pico points to texts in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, in which being is divided into *ens per se* and accidental being; God is not included under any of the ten categories, into which being *per se* is divided. God is thus taken "above" being. Where then, Pico wonders, is Aristotle discordant from Plato (*ubi discors a Platone est Aristoteles*)?[27]

Transcendence and transcendentality

Pico's discussion of the "Platonic" arguments for the priority of the "one" is focused on the argument that God, who is the highest simplicity (*summa simplicitas*), is *unum* but not *ens*. In his consideration of this argument, he distinguishes four steps or degrees (*gradus*) in the ascent of man to God, to which he relates different kinds of transcendentality.

Since God is all things in the most eminent and perfect way, the *first* degree in the transcending movement towards God is the surpassing of the conditions of particularity and limitation, the state of "this" being or "that" being. What remains is being itself, being absolutely (*simpliciter*) or "universal" being, "universal" not by predication but by perfection; the same holds for "good" and "one". The first degree of the transcending movement results in the identification of God and the transcendental perfections: he is *ipsum ens*, *ipsum unum*, *ipsum bonum* and *ipsum verum*.[28]

God is all things by one and the same perfection. The *second* degree in the transcending movement is the perception that "wisdom" and "justice" are not different perfections in God, but that all attributes are

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[27] *Ibid.*, c. 4 (pp. 88–96).

[28] *Ibid.*, c. 5 (pp. 96–104); especially p. 102: "Si particularitatis et terminationum conditionem his adimas, quod supererit non hoc aut illud ens erit, sed ipsum ens, sed simpliciter ens, sed universale ens, non praedicationis universalitate, sed perfectionis"; and p. 104: "Deus ergo ipsum ens, ipsum unum, ipsum bonum similiter et ipsum verum".

in God one by the highest unity of origin (*fontalis unitas*), in which every act, every form, every perfection is comprised in an eminent way above (*supra*) all things and outside (*extra*) all things.[29] The second degree reveals the special position of the notion "one".

In the *third* degree, the "deficiency" of the transcendental names is recognized. They signify something concrete and thus express something that is participated, as it has become clear in the analysis of the two modes of being that are the foundation of Aristotle's philosophy. God surpasses the concrete transcendental concepts: he is above (*super*) being (*ens*), one, true and good, and is identified with their abstract counterparts: God is being itself (*ipsum esse*), unity itself, truth itself and goodness itself.[30]

In the *fourth* degree, we enter into "the light of ignorance" (*ignorantiae lux*). What we finally can say is that God is in an inconceivable and ineffable manner above everything most perfect that we can say or conceive of him. Then we place God above (*super*) the unity, goodness, truth we have conceived as well as above being itself. In this degree, the abstract transcendental concepts are surpassed, and not only these but every name and every notion.[31]

The four transcendentals

From chapter 8, the subject-matter of *De ente et uno* is broadened to the transcendentals in general. The effect is that the discussion in the treatise takes up traditional issues of the Scholastic doctrine, such as the number of the transcendentals, their order and their universal extension.

Pico fixes the number at four: "being", "one", "true" and "good"—he borrows (see ch. IX) the term *quaternitas* from the Pythagoreans in order to express the "quaternary" transcendental structure of reality.

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[29] *Ibid.* (pp. 108–112).

[30] *Ibid.* (p. 104): "Haec nomina, ens, verum, unum, bonum, concretum quid dicunt et quasi participatum, quare rursus dicimus Deum super ens, super verum, super unum, super bonum esse, quia scilicet ipsum esse est, ipsa veritas, ipsa unitas, ipsa bonitas".

[31] *Ibid.*: "(…) hoc unum de Deo postremo dicentes esse ipsum inintelligibiliter et ineffabiliter super id omne quod nos de eo perfectissimum vel loqui possumus vel concipere, tunc super ipsam etiam quam conceperamus unitatem, bonitatem, veritatem, superque ipsum esse Deum eminentissime collocantes"; (p. 112): "In quarto gradu non solum supra illa, sed supra omne nomen quod formari, supra omnem notionem quae concipi a nobis possit ipsum esse sciebamus".

Two other notions, *aliquid* and *res*, are sometimes also listed as transcendentals, but Pico remarks that they are later added by followers of Avicenna, "who interpolated Aristotle's philosophy in many places". In contrast with Lorenzo Valla, Pico rejects both "Arab" transcendentals. Already in the *Conclusiones*, in the section "Philosophical conclusions dissenting from the common philosophy", he had advanced the thesis that "the six *transcendentia* that the common teaching posits are imagined by the later Latins; the Greek Peripatetics and their prince, Aristotle, did not know them".[32]

The general idea that determines Pico's account is that the four transcendentals are in God in a different manner from the way they are in created things, for God has them by himself (*a se*), while created things have them from another (*ab alio*).[33] His exposition is focused on the clarification of this difference; it does not explain how these concepts are common to God and creatures.

The presence of the four transcendentals in created things is based on the divine causality. All creatures have an efficient cause, an exemplary cause and a final cause, for they are *ab ipso, per ipsum* and *ad ipsum*. When things are considered with respect to their constitution by the power of God, they are called "beings"; when they are considered with respect to their correspondence to the divine exemplar, they are called "true"; and when they are considered with respect to their tendency to the final end, they are called "good". The three aspects of the causality of the first cause found three of the four transcendentals, but what about *unum*? Pico simply claims that when each thing is taken *secundum se*, absolutely, it is called "one".[34]

Pico's conclusion concerning the order of the transcendentals is traditional: everything is first conceived under the aspect of "being" and is next known as "one", as "true" and as "good".[35] His argumentation for the universal and equal extension of these concepts contains some new aspects. Everything that is is *unum*: Pico does not refer to the

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[32] *Ibid.*, c. 8 (p. 118): "Addita sunt his quattuor duo alia, 'aliquid' scilicet et 'res', a posterioribus Avicennam secutis qui multis in locis philosophiam Aristotelis interpolavit". Cf. *Conclusiones*, II: "Conclusiones philosophicae secundum propriam opinionem", n. 13 (ed. Biondi, p. 66; ed. Farmer, p. 376): "Sex transcendentia, quae ponit communis doctrina, a iunioribus latinis sunt efficta; ea et Graeci peripatetici et princeps eorum Aristoteles nescit".

[33] Pico della Mirandola, *De ente et uno*, c. 8 (ed. Boulnois / Tognon, p. 120).

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*

standard texts in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* but to a statement in Plato's *Sophistes* (237E), which asserts that "someone who does not say something that is one says nothing". Whatever is, is undivided in itself and divided from other things.

Everything that is is also *verum*: Pico appeals to Augustine's definition "The true is that which is"—a purely ontological definition which was regarded by most Scholastic authors as inadequate since it does not express what is typical of the transcendental true, the relation to the intellect. But Pico does not share this critical attitude; Augustine wants to say that a thing is called "true" when it is what it is said to be, such as gold is "true" when it is gold and not something else.[36]

Likewise whatever is, insofar as it is, is *bonum*. Pico's explanation is more elaborate than in the case of "one" and "true", since he attacks the "error" of the Neoplatonic thinker Olympiodorus, who contended that "being" (*ens*) and "good" are different. For illustration of his contention this author gives the example of someone who desires not to be, if he is not happy, which would indicate that we desire the good absolutely (*simpliciter*), not, however, being absolutely, but "well-being" (*bene esse*). According to Pico, Olympiodorus has not seen that the good, just as being, has many senses. The first sense is the natural being of things, as for a man to be man, upon which being a natural goodness follows. In addition to natural being there are other ways of being, which can be called "adventitious" (*adventitia*), such as for a man "to be wise" or "to be happy". The isomorphism between being and goodness is complete: just as wisdom and happiness are ways of being different from humanity, they are also other goods. If all things desire the good, by the same token they all desire being; and first of all they desire that goodness which follows upon the natural being, because this goodness is the foundation of all subsequent goods, which cannot subsist without it. How can someone be happy who is altogether not? In addition to the first goodness things desire other goods, just as they desire other ways of being in addition to their first being, for "to be happy" is a way of being different to "being a man". Olympiodorus's argument does not hold.[37]

After having clarified how the four transcendentals are in creatures, Pico next explicates how they are in God. They can be considered in

[36] *Ibid.* (p. 122).
[37] *Ibid.* (pp. 122–124).

God in two ways, either insofar as God is in himself (*in se*) or insofar as he is the cause of other things. According to the first consideration we conceive God as the *plenissima entitas*, the *individua unitas*, the *solidissima veritas* and the *beatissima bonitas*. If God is considered as the cause of other things, the order of the attributes changes: he will first be "one", because he is understood in himself before he is understood as cause; second, he will be "good"; third, "true", and fourth, "being". The order of the last three attributes is based on the order of the threefold divine causality: "good" is related to the final cause, "true" to the exemplary cause and "being" to the efficient cause; the causality of the efficient cause presupposes the causality of the two other causes.[38]

Moral dimension

The last (tenth) chapter of *De ente et uno* has as heading: "In which he turns (*convertit*) the entire disputation to the ordering (*institutio*) of life and the reform of morals (*emendatio morum*)". Pico "converts" the account to the moral dimension, quite unusual in treatises on the transcendentals—the only parallel is the "ethics of the transcendentals" in Meister Eckhart. Pico's turn seems to be inspired by his Christian "humanism".

The present disputation, he argues, primarily urges us, if we want to be blessed, to imitate the most blessed (*beatissimum*) of all things, namely God, by possessing unity, truth and goodness in us. Ambition disturbs the peace of unity, for ambition draws the soul outside itself. The splendor and light of truth is lost in the dark of the lusts. Avarice deprives us of goodness, for the property of goodness is to communicate the good that one possesses to others. These three—the pride of life, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes—are, according to a scheme of the vices derived from 1 John 2:16, of the world, not of the Father who is unity itself, truth itself and goodness itself. Let us, therefore, flee from here, that is, from the world, and rise to the Father, where the unifying peace is, the truest light and the best delight.[39]

[38] *Ibid.* (pp. 128–130).
[39] *Ibid.*, c. 10 (pp. 130–132).

Because these three transcendental properties "one", "true" and "good" are consequent on "being" through a permanent bond, it follows that when we are not one, true and good we "are" not absolutely, even if we seem to be. And although we may be thought to live, we would still be dying rather than living.[40]

[40] *Ibid.* (pp. 132–134): "Quod si tria haec, unum scilicet, verum et bonum perpetuo annexu ens consequuntur, reliquum est ut, cum illa non sumus, etiam prorsus non simus etsi esse videamur et, quamvis credamur vivere, moriamur tamen potius iugiter quam vivamus".

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE "METAPHYSICAL DISPUTATIONS" OF FRANCISCO SUÁREZ: BETWEEN SCHOLASTICISM AND MODERNITY

The circle has been closed. The order of exposition fixes our attention in this chapter on a philosophical project, with which we started our study by way of "Introduction": the *Disputationes metaphysicae*, published by Francisco Suárez in 1597. We brought up this work, since it clearly demonstrates the transformation of Aristotle's conception of metaphysics into a transcendental understanding of First Philosophy. Seeking the origin and the development of the transcendental way of thought, we followed the track back to medieval philosophy.

A salient feature of the *Disputations* is the endeavor to rearrange metaphysical questions into a systematic whole. Suárez breaks with the established tradition of a commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, a genre that had been used by Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and in his own time by Peter Fonseca. He wants to raise questions and consider things according to the *ordo doctrinae*, that is, the order of a demonstrative science, which has to determine its proper subject and examine the properties that *per se* belong to the subject. It has been suggested that the "absolute singularity" of Suárez's enterprise consists in his refusal to see Aristotle's *Metaphysics* as *the* metaphysics,[1] but he had predecessors in this respect. Suárez's project brings, as it were, the "second beginning of metaphysics" to an end, which had its origin in Avicenna's treatise on metaphysics and found its first systematic expression in the fourteenth century in the work *Metaphysics* of Nicholas Bonet (see ch. 10.4)—a name not mentioned by Suárez.

The *Disputationes metaphysicae* are divided by Suárez into two parts. In the first part (Disp. I–XXVII), he raises the "basic question" as to the subject/object of this science, determines the *ratio universalissima* of this subject, "being as being", and examines its properties

[1] J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, Paris 1990, p. 327.

(*passiones*) and causes. The second part (Disp. XXVIII–LIV) deals with the more determinate concepts of beings, departing from the main division of being into infinite and finite being.

The core of the first part of the *Disputations* is the account of the transcendentals. A systematic exposition of this doctrine is not something new—Suárez frequently refers (most in a critical sense) to a sixteenth-century source, the *Tractatus de transcendentibus* of Chrysostomus Javelli (d. 1538),[2] but no other work presents such an extensive and systematically elaborated theory as Suárez's *Disputations*:

Disp. II: De ratione essentiali seu conceptu entis
Disp. III: De passionibus entis in communi
Disp. IV–VII: De unitate
- IV: De unitate transcendentali in communi
- V: De unitate individuali
- VI: De unitate formali
- VII: De variis distinctionum generibus

Disp. VIII–IX: De veritate
- VIII: De veritate seu vero quod est passio entis
- IX: De falsitate seu falso

Disp. X–XI: De bonitate
- X: De bono seu bonitate transcendentali
- XI: De malo

Each Disputation is divided into smaller units, called *sectiones*. Each section is structured according to a similar scheme: a question is raised, for instance (Disp. VIII, sect. 7), "Whether truth is a property of real being?" Its treatment has a historical and a systematic aspect: Suárez first presents a doxagraphical survey, mentions four views on transcendental truth, discusses their arguments and refutes them; next he proposes his own solution of the question and concludes what transcendental truth is. In most sections, Suárez explains his position in a permanent discussion with the two main Scholastic models of transcendentality, those of Aquinas and Scotus. But what is the characteristic profile of his own conception?[3]

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[2] Cf. J. Iturrioz, "Fuentes de la metafisica de Suárez", in: *Pensamiento* 4, numero extraordinario (1948), pp. 31–89, in particular pp. 37–43.

[3] The fundamental importance of the transcendental explication of being is a conclusion on which the three leading studies on Suárez's metaphysics agree, but they disagree on the characteristic profile of his conception (see 14.6): J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*; L. Honnefelder, *Scientia transcendens. Die formale Bestimmung der Seiendheit und Realität in der Metaphysik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, Hamburg 1990, pp. 200–294; R. Darge, *Suárez' transzendentale Seinsauslegung*

14.1 The adequate object of metaphysics: *Ens inquantum ens reale*

Directive for the *Disputationes metaphysicae* in their entirety is the first Disputation, in which Suárez examines "the nature of First Philosophy or metaphysics". He starts this inquiry in the first section by raising the question as to the *obiectum* of this science, a term that he regards as a synonym of *subiectum*.[4] He first considers and discusses six opinions which claim that "the adequate object" of metaphysics is respectively:

1. Being taken most abstractly (*ens abstractissime sumptum*) so as to include not only all real beings (*entia realia*), but also beings of reason (*entia rationis*).
2. Real being taken as comprehending not only beings *per se* but also beings *per accidens*.
3. Only the highest real being, namely God.
4. Immaterial being, including God and the intelligences.
5. Being that is divided into the ten categories or finite being.
6. Substance qua substance.

Suarez analyzes the arguments for the various opinions and rejects all of them: the first two views take the object of metaphysics too broadly, the other four too narrowly. Three aspects of his discussion deserve closer attention.

The "supertranscendental" conception

The first opinion is not substantiated by concrete evidence, but is nevertheless historically interesting, since it seems to refer to an understanding of metaphysics as a "supertranscendental" science, although the term itself is not used in this context. The first opinion asserts namely that the object of metaphysics is "being taken most abstractly"

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und die Metaphysiktradition, Leiden-Boston 2004 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelaters, 80).

[4] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, I, prol. (ed. C. Berton, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXV [= Disp. I–XXVII], Paris 1866, p. 2): "et ideo primum omnium inquirendum nobis est hujus doctrinae objectum, seu subjectum". Cf. L. Honnefelder, *Scientia transcendens*, pp. 205–214. J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, pp. 195–227. R. Darge, *Suárez' transzendentale Seinsauslegung*, pp. 31–62.

so as to include both real being and being of reason. Such a concept "transcends" the *transcendentia*, which only refer to *ens reale*, and was therefore called "supertranscendental" by Spanish Scholastics of the sixteenth century (see ch. XV on the doctrine of the *supertranscendentia*). Suárez himself uses the term '*supertranscendentalis*' on one occasion in order to designate the most general concept of "relation"—he does not use, however, the term to signify something common to real beings and beings of reason.[5] The "supertranscendental" conception of metaphysics is explained by the isomorphism of the object of the intellect and the object of science. If being in its full extent can be the object of the intellect, it must, because of this "intelligibility", likewise be the object of the most universal science.[6]

Typical for the tendency to "objectify" the subject of metaphysics is Suárez's formulation of the "basic question" in terms of the *obiectum adaequatum*—the term that was introduced by Duns Scotus in his analysis of the first object of the human intellect. Suárez does not raise the epistemological question as to the first adequate object in his *Disputationes metaphysicae* but discusses the issue in his treatise *De anima*. There he concludes that the adequate object of our intellect is "being considered in its full extent" (*in tota latitudine sua*), since an adequate object encompasses all things at which a potency can be directed, and the intellect can know everything that has the *ratio* of being.[7]

In this context, Suárez raises a question that is also relevant for his refusal of the "supertranscendental" conception of metaphysics in the *Disputations*: Are beings of reason (*entia rationis*) included under this *objectum totale*? His answer is negative: they are not *directe* included under "being" that is the adequate object of the intellect. His argument is that the object of a potency must be formally one in the respect, under which all things at which that potency is directed are included.

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[5] Cf. Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, XLVIII, sect. 1, n. 5 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXVI [= Disp. XXVIII–LIV], Paris 1866, p. 869): "ergo multo magis conceptus abstractior, scilicet respectus in communi, ut abstrahit a transcendentali et praedicamentali, non potest esse genericus, sed (ut ita dicam) supertranscendentalis".

[6] *Ibid.*, I, sect. 1, n. 2 (Vol. XXV, p. 2): "Quae opinio suadetur primo, quia ens sic sumptum potest esse objectum adæquatum alicujus scientiæ; ergo maxime hujus quæ est omnium abstractissima. Antecedens patet, tum quia ens in tota illa amplitudine intellectui objicitur; ergo et potest objici uni scientiæ, est enim eadem ratio (…)".

[7] Suárez, *Tractatus tertius De anima*, IV, c. 1, n. 3 (ed. C. Berton, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. III, Paris 1866, p. 713).

But real being and being of reason do not have one formal *ratio* in any respect, because a being of reason is "nothing" and only nominally agrees with real being. Therefore, being that is common to them cannot be the adequate object of the intellect.[8]

In his discussion in *De anima*, Suárez explicitly distinguishes between "being" that is the object of metaphysics and "being" that is the object of the intellect. "Being" that is the object of metaphysics signifies a *ratio* which abstracts from material being and is thus distinguished from "mobile being" (*ens mobile*)—the object of physics; "being" that is the object of the intellect, on the other hand, includes all things.[9]

In the *Disputations*, Suárez rejects the "supertranscendental" conception of metaphysics; beings of reason, such as privations and negations, must be excluded from the proper object of this science. His basic argument is the same as the argument in *De anima* that beings of reason are not directly included under "being" that is the adequate object of the intellect: there is no concept of being common to real being and being of reason, but only a nominal community. The adequate object of a science, however, requires some "objective" unity.[10] It is true that metaphysics sometimes considers *entia rationis*, such as "genus" and "species", for a better understanding of the properties of "real" being, but beings of reason do not belong *per se* and *directe* to the adequate object of metaphysics.[11] In the very last Disputation (LIV), in which Suárez deals with *ens rationis*, he repeats the arguments for its exclusion from the scope of metaphysics: beings of reason are not true beings and no common concept can be assigned to real beings and beings of reason.[12]

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[8] *Ibid.*, nn. 3–4 (pp. 713–714).

[9] *Ibid.*, n. 9 (p. 715): "(…) respondetur aliter ens objectum dici Metaphysicae, et aliter intellectus: metaphysicae enim est objectum prout significat rationem quamdam abstrahentem a materia secundum esse; intellectus autem: prout omnia comprehendit, quo fit, ut ens objectum metaphysicae distinguatur ab ente mobili: ens vero, quod objectum est intellectus, omnia comprehendat".

[10] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, I, sect. 1, n. 5 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 3): "Et ratio est, quia talia neque vere sunt entia, sed fere nomine tantum, neque cum entibus realibus conveniunt in eodem conceptu entis, sed solum per quamdam imperfectam analogiam proportionalitatis (…); objectum autem adæquatum scientiæ requirit unitatem aliquam objectivam".

[11] *Ibid.*, n. 6 (pp. 3–4).

[12] *Ibid.*, LIV, sect. 1, n. 9 (Vol. XXVI, p. 665): "(…) ens rationis, quamvis aliquo modo participet nomen entis (…) non tamen posse participare aut convenire cum entibus realibus in conceptu ejus".

The "theological" conception

The third opinion discussed by Suárez is the radical opposite of the first one: it teaches that only the highest real being, namely God, is the adequate object. This view represents, as Suárez observes, the theological conception of metaphysics, defended by Averroes in his controversy with Avicenna. God must be the object of the most eminent science, which is called "theology".[13]

In his criticism, Suárez uses the arguments that have been advanced for the priority of an ontological conception since the "second beginning" of metaphysics. He presents what he calls "an argument *a priori*", which refers to the epistemological conditions of a natural knowledge of God. Because metaphysics proceeds by the natural light of reason, it does not reach God as He is in Himself (*in se*), but only insofar as He is knowable from creatures. That implies that God is always reached under a *ratio* common (*communis*) with created things. Thus God is contained under the object of metaphysics as the "primary" and "principal" object (*praecipuum objectum*), but He is not its "adequate" object.[14]

The fact that God is included under the adequate object does not mean that the *ratio* of this object is something naturally prior to God. What is at stake is a conceptual priority, namely, a priority in the universality of predication (*in universalitate praedicationis*).[15] Suárez levels a similar criticism, emphasizing the necessity of a universal "ontology", against the fourth opinion. The immaterial substance as such cannot be the adequate object of metaphysics, because in a substance of that kind more universal and common concepts can be considered. Hence the adequate object of this science must be determined under an aspect more universal than immateriality.[16]

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[13] *Ibid.*, I, sect. 1, n. 8 (Vol. XXV, p. 4).

[14] *Ibid.*, n. 11 (p. 5): "Ratio denique a priori est, quia hæc scientia, cum discursu naturali procedat, non attingit Deum prout in se est, sed quantum ex creaturis manifestari potest lumine naturali intellectus humani; et ideo nulla esse potest scientia naturalis, quæ ipsum attingat, et respiciat ut adæquatum objectum, quia ratio, sub qua attingitur, semper communis est aliis rebus creatis. Unde constat recte dictum esse, tractando fundamentum superioris sententiæ, Deum contineri sub objecto hujus scientiæ ut primum ac præcipuum objectum, non tamen ut adæquatum".

[15] *Ibid.*, n. 13 (p. 6).

[16] *Ibid.*, n. 15 (p. 7): "Non tamen probat, nec recte concludit, substantiam immaterialem, ut sic, esse objectum adæquatum hujus scientiæ, quia in ipsa immateriali substantia considerari possunt aliæ rationes, seu conceptus objectivi universaliores et communiores, de quibus secundum adæquatam rationem potest aliqua scientia tradi, nam his rationibus respondent propria principia et proprietates; nulla autem alia sci-

The "categorial" conception

The fifth opinion claims that categorial being is the adequate object of metaphysics, but Suárez regards this view as too narrow. The division of being into the categories is not a division of being that is the adequate object of this science, for the object includes not only categorial being, but also *rationes transcendentales*.[17]

An interesting aspect of Suárez's discussion concerns a certain version of this opinion, which equates categorial being with finite being with the result that God is excluded from the *ratio* of the object. God, however, is not completely excluded from the consideration of metaphysics, since He is the first cause of its object. This view is attributed to Dominic of Flanders (d. 1476), who wrote a commentary on the *Metaphysics* in the spirit of Aquinas's commentary. One could wonder whether the fifth opinion is not in fact the view of Aquinas himself. As Suárez observes, the proponents of this view refer to texts, in which Thomas teaches that God is considered by metaphysics as the (extrinsic) cause and principle of its object, and not as a part of it.[18]

The idea that God is only considered in metaphysics as an extrinsic principle is false according to Suárez. The critical arguments against the theological conception have convincingly shown that God, although not the adequate object, is definitely the "principal" object of metaphysics. There can be no doubt, he concludes, that God falls *absolute* under the object of this science.[19] Suárez suggests that Aquinas would have shared this view, but his reading goes against the spirit of Thomas's conception. Aquinas explicitly denies that God falls under the "subject" of First Philosophy (see ch. 6.2). Suárez's terminological shift from "subject" to "object" enables him to neutralize Thomas's statement. Aquinas has not denied that metaphysics deals with God, and one could therefore say that he sees God as the principal "object" of this science.[20]

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entia præter metaphysicam has rationes contemplatur; igitur adæquatum metaphysicæ objectum sub aliqua universaliori ratione designandum est".

[17] *Ibid.*, n. 20 (p. 9).

[18] *Ibid.*, n. 18 (p. 8).

[19] *Ibid.*, n. 19 (pp. 8–9): "Falsumque subinde est, hanc scientiam non agere de Deo ut de primario ac principali objecto suo, sed tantum ut de principio extrinseco (…); ergo absolute Deus cadit sub objectum huius scientiae".

[20] *Ibid.*, n. 20 (p. 9): "Nec D. Thomas umquam oppositum docuit, sed solum hanc scientiam pervenire ad cognitionem Dei sub ratione principii; non tamen negat eamdem scientiam tractare de Deo ut de praecipuo objecto".

Conclusion: Metaphysics a transcendental science

After having critically considered and refuted six opinions on the adequate object of metaphysics, Suárez concludes that this object is "being insofar as it is real being" (*ens inquantum ens reale*). It was, he observes, Aristotle's view in the fourth book of his *Metaphysics*, which was followed by Aquinas, Alexander of Hales, Duns Scotus and Albert the Great. The conclusion seems to be the necessary consequence of the previous discussions, for they have shown that the adequate object of metaphysics is neither (i) supertranscendental being, since beings of reason must be excluded, nor (ii) divine being nor (iii) categorial being, since the object must be conceived in a more general way.[21] Metaphysics turns out to be a "transcendental" science: the universal *rationes*, which it explains, are *transcendentales*.[22] But how does Suárez understand transcendentality?

14.2 Transcendental being

After the determination of the subject/object of metaphysics, it is necessary to explicate the *propria ratio* of this subject. Therefore, Suárez's next step in accordance with the order of science is to raise the question "What is being as being?" (*quid sit ens in quantum ens*) in the second Disputation.[23] Since it was proven in the first Disputation that being which is the subject of metaphysics is common to God and creatures as well as to substance and accident, the question presupposes the unity of the concept of "being".

In late medieval philosophy the unity of the subject of metaphysics was usually discussed in terms of the analogy or univocity of being. That dilemma is also at the background of Suárez's account, as it appears from his first objection to the unity of the concept of being, which is based on the idea of analogy. If the concept of being is one by the unity of univocation, the analogy is removed; if the concept is one

[21] *Ibid.*, n. 26 (p. 11).

[22] *Ibid.*, n. 27 (p. 11): "(…) rationes universales, quas metaphysica considerat, transcendentales sunt". I, sect. 4, n. 13: "[Metaphysica] transcendentales rationes entis declarat, sine quarum cognitione vix potest in aliqua scientia quippiam exacte tractari".

[23] *Ibid.*, II, prol. (p. 64): "His suppositis, quae de objecto seu subjecto hujus scientiae tradidimus, necessarium imprimis est, ejus propriam et adaequatam rationem (…) exponere. (…) In praesente ergo disputatione explicanda nobis est quaestio, quid sit ens in quantum ens".

only by an analogous unity, it is not really one, for analogy includes a plurality of *rationes* that have only a proportion to one another.[24] Suárez wishes to establish the unity of the concept of being prior to and as a condition for the discussion on analogy or univocity.

14.2.1 *The unity of the concept of being*

1. The basis of Suárez's exposition is a distinction between two kinds of concepts, the "formal" and the "objective" concept. The "formal" concept is the act of the mind through which the intellect conceives some thing or a common *ratio*; it is called "formal" because it is the intrinsic or formal term of the act of conception. The "objective" concept is the thing or *ratio* which is properly and immediately represented by the formal concept. In strict parlance, the objective concept is not a concept at all; it is rather the thing known and is said to be a "concept" only through extrinsic denomination from the formal concept which is concerned with its object.[25]

Suárez qualifies the distinction between the formal and the objective concept as "common" (*vulgaris*), but does not specify the historical source. Its origin goes back to the fifteenth century: the distinction was already used by Johannes Capreolus in the context of his discussion of Scotus's univocity claim in his work *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis* (1409). Instead of the expression "objective concept" Capreolus employs the phrase *conceptus objectalis*, which has been derived from Peter Auriol.[26] The connection with Auriol is historically

[24] *Ibid.*, sect. 2, n. 1 (p. 70).

[25] *Ibid.*, sect. 1, n. 1 (pp. 64–65): "Supponenda imprimis est vulgaris distinctio conceptus formalis et objectivi; conceptus formalis dicitur actus ipse (…) quo intellectus rem aliquam seu communem rationem concipit (…). Conceptus objectivus dicitur res illa, vel ratio, quae proprie et immediate per conceptum formalem cognoscitur seu representatur; (…) 'conceptus' quidem per denominationem extrinsecam a conceptu formali, per quem objectum ejus concipi dicitur".

[26] John Capreolus, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, I, d. 2, q. 1 ad arg. § 9 (ad arg. Scoti et aliorum) (ed. C. Paban / Th. Pègues, Tours 1899–1908 [reprinted in Frankfurt am Main 1967], p. 141): "Unde, ad omnes ejus [*sc.* Scoti] probationes, dicitur generaliter, quod utique bene probant quod ens habet unum conceptum communem Deo et creaturis et decem praedicamentis, sumendo conceptum pro conceptione quam intellectus format dum concipit ens. Si autem loquamur de conceptu objectali, qui non est aliud quam intelligibile quod objicitur intellectui formanti dictam conceptionem, (…) tunc distinguendum est de unitate (…)". Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super I Sententiarum*, d. 2, sect. 9, n. 48 (ed. E. M. Buytaert, Louvain-Paderborn 1956 (Franciscan Institute Publications. Text Series, 3), p. 483): "(…) considerandum est

significant, since Suárez's aim is similar to that of the fourteenth-century critic of Scotus, namely, to show that the objective concept of being has a unity which does not imply univocity.

In the second Disputation, Suárez intends "to explain the objective concept of being as such according to the totality of its abstraction, in virtue of which being is the object of metaphysics". But the point of departure of his analysis is the formal concept, because this concept is "better known" to us.[27]

2. Is there one formal concept of being? Suárez refers to an opinion that answers in the negative. The denial of the conceptual unity of being is found in the work *De nominum analogia* of Cajetan (1498) and is motivated by the idea that "being" would otherwise be univocal and not analogical.[28] But to Suárez's mind this consequence does not necessarily follow (as he will show later; see 14.5) and is no reason for questioning the unity of being. The proper formal concept of being is one and prescinds really and conceptually from other formal concepts of things. It is the view of Scotus and his followers, but can also be gathered from various texts of Aquinas.[29]

Suárez advances several arguments for the formal unity of the concept of being. One of them is drawn from the signification of the word 'being'. It is clear that this word has one meaning in its original imposition: it signifies many things not insofar as they are many but insofar as they agree with one another, namely as "being". One formal concept in the mind corresponds with that which is signified by this word. This concept of being is not only one, but also the most simple (*simplicissimus*), since it is the ultimate term of the *resolutio* of all other concepts, and the first (*primus*) concept formed by man—Suárez refers to

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circa conceptum, quoniam potest concipi vel pro actu intellectus realiter inhaerente, vel pro conceptu objectali". Cf. J.-F. Courtine, *Inventio analogiae. Métaphysique et ontothéologie*, Paris 2005, pp. 294–296.

[27] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, II, sect. 1, n. 1 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 65).

[28] *Ibid.*, n. 2 (p. 65): "Prima sententia absolute negat dari unum conceptum formalem entis (…). Ita sentit Cajetan., opusc. De analogia nominum, cap. 4 et 6. (…) Fundamentum est, quia alias ens esset univocum, et non analogum, quod infra videbimus esse falsum".

[29] *Ibid.*, n. 9 (p. 68).

Aquinas's accounts in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1 and q. 21, a. 1—as well as the most common (*communissimus*) and indeterminate (*confusus*).[30]

3. Concerning the objective concept of being, Suárez presents two theses. The first one claims the unity of this concept because of the correspondence between objective and formal concept. The objective concept of "being" denotes all things, i.e. substance and accident, God and creature, in one way, namely insofar as they are similar to one another and agree in being.[31] Suárez proves the thesis *ex re ipsa* and, as it were, *a priori* as follows: All real things have some similarity and agreement (*convenientia*) in the *ratio* of being. Therefore, they can be conceived and represented precisely under that aspect under which they agree, which is the objective concept of being. The antecedent of the argument is evident from the terms themselves, because just as being and non-being are primarily opposed and constitute the first principle of all things—*quodlibet esse vel non esse*—, so every being has some similarity with every being whatsoever. From this it also follows that the concept of being is *transcendens*.[32]

Suárez's second thesis claims that the objective concept of being is prescinded *secundum rationem* from all particular determinations. He sees this assertion as a necessary consequence of the first thesis. All determinate beings that divide being are distinct from one another and conceived in a plurality of concepts. They cannot therefore be understood in one objective concept, unless they are prescinded and abstracted from the proper determinations by which they are distinguished.[33] The second thesis has a critical purpose, insofar as it asserts that the abstraction from the particular determinations is not "from

[30] *Ibid.*: "Hinc etiam conceptus entis, non solum unus, sed etiam simplicissimus dici solet, ita ut ad eum fiat ultima resolutio caeterorum; (…) unde hic conceptus dici etiam solet ex se esse primus qui ab homine formatur, quia, caeteris paribus, facilius de quacunque re concipi potest, quae omnia tradit D. Thomas q. 1 de Verit., art. 1. et q. 21, art. 1. (…) Quapropter de unitate hujus conceptus communissimi et confusi, fere nullus est qui dubitet".

[31] *Ibid.*, sect. 2, n. 8 (p. 72): "Dico ergo primo, conceptui formali entis respondere unum conceptum objectivum adaequatum, et immediatum, qui expresse non dicit substantiam, neque accidens, neque Deum, nec creaturam, sed haec omnia per modum unius, scilicet quatenus sunt inter se aliquo modo similia, et conveniunt in essendo".

[32] *Ibid.*, n. 14 (pp. 74–75).

[33] *Ibid.*, n. 15 (p. 75).

the nature of the thing" (*ex natura rei*), but *secundum rationem*. Suárez rejects the Scotist doctrine of the modal distinction, according to which "being" would be distinct *ex natura rei* from its inferiors "substance" and "accident". Because of its transcendental character the objective concept of being is not through any "real" difference distinct from inferior beings.[34]

After having explained the unity of the (formal and objective) concept of being, Suárez comes back to the objection based on the idea of analogy, which seems to imply a plurality of *rationes*. He announces that he will return to this difficulty later in his work, but will now confine himself to one observation. It is a striking statement that illustrates how much the conceptual unity of being is Suárez's concern. Everything he has said about the unity of the concept of being seems to be much clearer and more certain than the claim that being is analogical, and it is therefore not right to deny the unity of the concept in defence of analogy. But if one of the two were to be denied, it would be analogy, which is uncertain, rather than the unity of the concept, which seems to be proven by certain arguments.[35]

14.2.2 *The* 'ratio' *of "being": "Reality" and "actuality"*

A twofold sense of "being"

After the clarification of the unity of the concept of being, its essential *ratio* must be determined.[36] Suárez seeks to define his position in the ongoing Scholastic discussions on the primary meaning of "being" in which we can note a shift from "actuality" (Thomas Aquinas) towards "reality", a quidditative understanding of being (Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus). This shift becomes apparent in the different manner in which the terms "being" and "thing" are conceived. In his account of the transcendentals, Aquinas establishes that, whereas the name '*res*' is

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[34] Suárez elaborates this criticism in sect. 3: "Utrum ratio seu conceptus entis in re ipsa et ante intellectum sit aliquo modo praecisus ab inferioribus".

[35] *Ibid.*, sect. 2, n. 36 (p. 81): "Nunc solum assero, omnia, quae diximus de unitate conceptus entis, longe clariora et certiora videri, quam quod ens sit analogum, et ideo non recte propter defendendum analogiam negari unitatem conceptus, sed si alterum negandum esset, potius analogia, quae incerta est, quam unitas conceptus, quae certis rationibus videtur demonstrari, esset neganda".

[36] *Ibid.*, sect. 4, n. 1 (p. 87): "Cum dictum sit ens dicere unum conceptum objectivum, oportet in quo ejus formalis seu essentialis ratio consistat, breviter declarare".

taken from the quiddity, the name '*ens*' is taken from the act of being; something is called "being", insofar as it is in act. According to Henry of Ghent, by contrast, a thing can be called "being", not because it actually exists, but insofar as it has an essence capable of extramental existence. He understands '*ens*' in the sense of '*res*', that is, as quidditative being.

In his introduction to the question, Suárez engages in this debate by referring the view of Dominic Soto (1494–1560). This Spanish Thomist argued that *ens* cannot be said quidditatively of things, especially of created things, because it expresses a relation to being (*habitudo ad esse*), which does not belong to the essence of a creature. Consequently, Soto emphasizes the difference between the terms '*ens*' and '*res*'. '*Res*' is predicated quidditatively, because it signifies the true and fixed (*rata*) quiddity absolutely, that is, without any reference to being (*sine ordine ad esse*); '*ens*', however, is not predicated quidditatively, since the term does not signify the quiddity absolutely, but under the aspect of being (*sub ratione essendi*) or insofar as it can have *esse*.[37]

Suárez's own explanation of the *ratio* of *ens* starts with a distinction between two senses of "being", which is meant to do justice to both poles of the medieval debate. "Being" has a different meaning if it is taken as a participle (*ut participium*) or as a noun (*ut nomen*). Taken as a participle, "being" signifies "the act of being (*actus essendi*) as exercised" and is the same as "what exists in act". Taken as a noun, it means "the formal essence" of a thing which has or can have being (*esse*). Metaphysics considers being in the latter sense, for every science prescinds from the actual existence of its subject.[38]

Suárez calls the distinction between being as a participle and being as a noun "usual" (*usitata*), but its history has not yet been written.[39] Already Duns Scotus had observed that the distinction used to be made "of old" (*antiquitus*). He presents the distinction, when discussing the truth value of the proposition '*Caesar est homo*', if Caesar does not exist. It is correct to say '*Caesar non est*', if *esse existere* is meant. But

[37] *Ibid.*, n. 2 (p. 88).

[38] *Ibid.*, n. 3 (p. 88): "Ens ergo (…) interdum sumitur ut participium verbi *sum*, et ut sic significat actum essendi ut exercitum, estque idem quod existens actu; interdum vero sumitur ut nomen significans de formali essentiam ejus rei, quae habet vel potest habere esse (…); quomodo metaphysica considerat ens, et hoc modo ens in decem praedicamenta dividitur".

[39] Cf. J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, pp. 231–240.

ens in this sense is not a higher predicate with respect to '*homo*', so we may not infer '*Caesar non est homo*' from the proposition '*Caesar non est ens*'. For that reason a distinction between *ens participium* and *ens nomen* was made "of old". "Being" as a participle signifies the same as "that which exists" (*existens*), "being" as a noun signifies "that which has an essence" (*habens essentiam*) and is the being that is divided into the ten categories. If "being" is taken in the latter nominal sense, it is correct to say '*Caesar est ens*'.[40] Scotus's discussion indicates that the twofold distinction of being is rooted in the distinction between *esse existentiae* and *esse essentiae* in late thirteenth-century ontology.

When Suárez introduces the distinction between "being" as a participle and "being" as a noun, he refers to Cajetan and suggests that this sixteenth-century author had rejected the distinction.[41] However, Cajetan, in his commentary on Aquinas's writing *De ente et essentia*, does not simply dismiss the distinction as such, but solely a certain interpretation of it. What is philosophically interesting is that Cajetan relates the difference of opinion to the question which of the two senses of being is *ens transcendens*.

According to "some" (*quidam*) "being in the nominal sense (*ens nominaliter*)", which is predicated of every being—every thing is being in virtue of its essence—, is *transcendens* and consequently convertible with the other transcendental determinations.[42] But Cajetan maintains another interpretation: What is transcendental is "being in the participial sense (*ens participialiter*)". To his mind this conclusion is supported by texts of Aquinas, in which Thomas proves the convertibility of "being" and "good". This convertibility can only hold for being in the participial sense, since a thing is being and good, insofar as it is in act.[43] Transcendental being is not an essential predicate of things.

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[40] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in primum librum Perihermeneias*, qq. 5–8, n. 70 (ed. The Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera philosophica*, Vol. II, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. – Washington, D.C., 1978, p. 90).

[41] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, II, sect. 4, n. 3 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 88): "Ad explicandam hanc rem, et tollendam aequivocationem, utendum nobis est usitata distinctione entis, quam Cajetan et Soto supra sine causa rejiciunt".

[42] Cajetan, *In De ente et essentia D. Thomae Aquinatis Commentaria*, c. 4, q. 5 (ed. M.-H. Laurent, Turin 1934, p. 87).

[43] *Ibid.*: "Mihi autem aliter dicendum occurrit: dico enim quod ens participialiter est id quod est transcendens, divisum in decem praedicamenta. Quod ex eo patere potest, quod S. Thomas, I parte, q. V et VI, et in quaestionibus De veritate, q. 21 (a. 1), ostendit bonum, quod etiam dividitur in decem praedicamenta (ut dicitur I Ethicorum) converti cum ente participialiter, non nominaliter".

The identification of ens *and* res

On the basis of the distinction between the two senses of being Suárez accepts a twofold *ratio* of being. If being is taken as a participle, its *ratio* is "what exists in act" or "what has the real act of being". If it is taken as a noun, the *ratio* of being is "what has a real essence (*essentia realis*)"—"real", that is, not "fictitious", but "true" and "apt to real existence".[44]

The relation between these two *rationes* has not to be understood in the sense that they divide a common concept of being. They are related to one another such as the more contracted concept of being is related to the less contracted concept. The nominal sense of being signifies that which has a real essence by prescinding from actual existence; it does not exclude or deny such an existence, but only abstracts from it. The participial sense of being signifies that which has a real essence together with actual existence; it is thus "more contracted" (*magis contractum*).[45] The nominal sense of being is the most common (*communissima*) *ratio* of being, is predicated quidditatively of things and is transcendental.[46]

Suárez concludes that the term '*ens*' is synonymous with '*res*'—a conclusion that is a critical reaction to Dominic Soto's view that these terms have quite distinct meanings. '*Res*' and '*ens*' differ only in the etymology of their names but signify the same. The former term signifies what is *firmum* and *ratum* (Henry of Ghent's terminology for a being that is not fictitious) and "what has a real quiddity"; '*ens*' in the nominal sense signifies "what has a real essence".[47]

J.-F. Courtine has interpreted Suarez's identification of '*ens*' and '*res*' as a "radical change" and as the expression of a new concept of "reality", since the identification is only possible if "being" in the nominal

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[44] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, II, sect. 4, nn. 4–5 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 89).

[45] *Ibid.*, n. 9 (p. 90).

[46] *Ibid.*, n. 13 (p. 91): "Atque hinc obiter colligitur rationem entis communissimam, quae significatur per eam vocem in vi nominis sumptam, esse essentialem, et praedicari quidditative de suis inferioribus". Cf. *ibid.*, n. 14 (p. 92): "(…) sed [ens] intime transcendit omnia".

[47] *Ibid.*, n. 15 (p. 92): "Unde obiter colligo, *ens* in vi nominis sumptum, et *rem*, idem omnino esse seu significare, solumque differre in etymologia nominum; nam *res* dicitur a quidditate, quatenus est aliquid firmum et ratum, id est, non fictum, qua ratione dicitur quidditas realis; *ens* vero in praedicta significatione dicit id, quod habet essentiam realem: eamdem ergo omnino rem seu rationem realem important".

sense is *sine ordine ad esse*, that is, is deprived of every reference to actual existence. "Being" refers to what is "thinkable".[48] This interpretation assumes that Suárez adopts Dominic Soto's understanding of the meaning of the term '*res*', namely as signifying the quiddity of a thing "without any ordering to being". However, this is not Suárez's conception of '*res*' and of the *ratio* of being in the nominal sense, as his explanation of the phrase "real essence" (*essentia realis*) makes clear.

An essence or quiddity cannot be understood as "real", he observes, without a reference to being (*esse*) and real actual entity, for we can only conceive an essence that does not exist in act as "real", if it is not repugnant for it to be an "actual" entity through actual existence.[49] Suárez conceives "reality" with a reference to actual existence outside the mind. The addition of the adjective "real" to the phrase "being as being" in his determination of the subject/object of metaphysics (in Disp. I) must be comprehended against the background of this explanation of the *ratio* of being.

14.2.3 *The transcendentality of being*

If "being" possesses an objective unity and its *ratio* is conceptually distinct from the other determinations of things, the problem as to how "being" is contracted to its inferiors arises. This problem immediately touches on the transcendentality of being, as Suárez clearly indicates in the subject-matter of section 5 of the second Disputation: "Whether the *ratio* of being transcends all concepts and differences of the inferior beings in such a way that it is intimately and essentially included in them".[50]

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[48] J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, p. 231: "ce renversement radical"; p. 240: "(…) il s'agit pour Suarez d'assurer leur totale identification, ce qui n'est possible qu'à la seule condition que l'*ens* dans son acception nominale soit dépouillé de toute visée, de toute référence (…) à l'*esse*, entendu comme *esse actualis existentiae*". Cf. p. 289.

[49] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, II, sect. 4, n. 14 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 92): "Quod vero essentia aut quidditas realis sit, intelligi non potest sine ordine ad esse et realem entitatem actualem; non enim aliter concipimus essentiam aliquam, quae actu non existit, esse realem, nisi quia talis est, ut ei non repugnat esse entitatem actualem, quod habet per actualem existentiam; quamvis ergo actu esse non sit de essentia creaturae, tamen ordo ad esse, vel aptitudo essendi est de intrinseco et essentiali conceptu ejus".

[50] *Ibid.*, sect. 5 (pp. 92–98): "Utrum ratio entis transcendat omnes rationes et differentias inferiorum entium, ita ut in eis intime et essentialiter includatur".

Suárez let there be no mistake about the objective of the question: it is directed against the *opinio Scoti* that being is neither included in the ultimate differences nor in the intrinsic modes, by which being is determinate to the ten categories, nor in its properties "one", "true" and "good".[51] He attacks a critical point in Scotus's doctrine, insofar as the transcendentality of being seems to be jeopardized because of the claim that being cannot be predicated *in quid* of ultimate differences and its proper, transcendental attributes (see ch. 9.4.4). Suárez also extends the predicative impossibility to the "intrinsic modes" of being; apparently, he sees Scotus's modal difference as a difference that somehow implies the addition of a reality.

Suárez understands the transcendentality of being not in a purely extensional sense, but gives it an intensional interpretation; being as being is intrinsically included in every being without any exception, be it the concept of a difference or of an intrinsic mode.[52] From this perspective he criticizes what he calls a *fundamentum* of Scotus's position, his proof that being cannot be predicated *in quid* of ultimate differences. The argument establishes that just as the resolution of a composed being ultimately ends with two wholly diverse components, namely the ultimate act and its ultimate potency, so too does the resolution in the conceptual order end with two wholly diverse concepts, a purely determinable one, "being", and a purely determining, the ultimate difference. But to Suárez's mind this model, according to which the determinable and determining concept exclude one another, is fully inadequate in the case of the "higher transcendental predicates".[53]

In the next section 6, Suárez examines how the concept of "being as being" is contracted or determined to inferior beings. He calls this question a "principal difficulty" (*potissima difficultas*), about which two extreme opinions exist. The first (Peter Auriol?) denies that the concept of being is prescinded or abstracted at all; it actually coincides with the proper *rationes* of things, with the result that there is no need for any contraction or determination of being. This view, however, is

[51] *Ibid.*, n. 2 (pp. 92–93).

[52] *Ibid.*, n. 16 (p. 97): "Dicendum est ergo, ens, in quantum ens, intrinsece includi in omni ente, et in omni conceptu positivae differentiae, aut modi entis realis".

[53] *Ibid.*, n. 18 (p. 98): "Si autem resolvendo metaphysicam compositionem pervenitur ad simplices conceptus non compositos ex genere et differentia, jam in illis respectu praedicatorum superiorum transcendentium, non oportet servari praedictam proprtionem, quia in eis non reperitur ille determinationis modus".

unsatisfactory, because the concept of being is prescinded *secundum rationem* from more determinate concepts and its contraction must thus be accounted for. The other opinion is "Scotus's philosophy", which teaches that since the concept of being is prescinded from its inferiors *ex natura rei*, its contraction occurs through something that is not intrinsically being. Again Suárez is critical: Scotus misunderstood the nature of the abstraction of "being" and was deceived in devising real differences that are not beings.[54]

The contraction and determination of being to the concept of "substance", for instance, does not occur in the manner of a composition (*per modum compositionis*) of being with a mode of being, but in the manner of a more express conception (*per modum expressioris conceptionis*) of what was confusedly conceived in an abstract concept.[55] Suárez gives a transcendental justification of this conclusion. An abstraction or *praecisio* by exclusion cannot occur in being because of its "illimitability" (*illimitatio*) and "transcendentality" (*transcendentia*). Since the agreement, in which the concept of being is founded, is equally contained in every entity according to its totality, it is only in being that another kind of *praecisio* can occur, namely not "by exclusion" but "by the indetermination (*confusio*)" of the concept. Consequently, the determination of the concept of being can occur through a simple and more express concept, because the "contraction" must be proportionate to the "abstraction", and the "expression" to the *praecisio*.[56]

14.3 The properties of being in general

After the explication of the *ratio* of the subject of metaphysics, it is the proper task of a science to demonstrate the properties that belong to its subject.[57] But Suárez immediately raises the question of how this

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[54] *Ibid.*, sect. 6, n. 1 (p. 99): "Alii ergo ita praescindunt, et abstrahunt conceptum entis, ut contrahi et determinari existiment per aliquid quod intrinsece non sit ens, quomodo philosophatur Scotus, qui non solum secundum rationem, sed etiam ex natura rei hujusmodi praecisionem excogitavit; tamen in duobus deceptus est (…): primo, ponendo talem modum abstractionis et praecisionis realis; secundo, supposita illa, fingendo modos seu differentias positivas reales, quae entia non sint".

[55] *Ibid.*, n. 7 (pp. 100–101).

[56] *Ibid.*, n. 10 (pp. 101–102).

[57] *Ibid.*, III, prol. (p. 102): "Explicata formali ratione objecti adaequati hujus scientiae (…), oportet de passionibus illi adaequatis, et quae cum illo convertuntur, disputare; quoniam proprium munus scientiae est passiones de suo subjecto demonstrare".

is possible in a transcendental science of being as being; no Scholastic text discusses the problem in such a systematic way.[58]

14.3.1 *Does being as being have properties?*

1. The problem of a science of being consists in the fact that the structure of a science, composed of a subject and properties, cannot simply be applied to being (*ens*) and its properties. A real property of a subject has at least four conditions: (i) it is something real (*aliqua res*), and not nothing; (ii) it is distinguished *ex natura rei* from the subject, for if it is identical with the subject, it is its essence rather than its property; (iii) it is convertible with the subject; and (iv) the subject does not belong to the essence of the property. But it is impossible that a property has all these four conditions with respect to being.[59]

The main difficulty is that a real property is intrinsically and essentially a "real being" (*ens reale*), for otherwise it would be no real property (the first condition). But if the property is a property of being, being cannot belong to its essence, because the subject does not belong to the essence of the property (the fourth condition). Moreover, what is essentially being cannot be distinguished *ex natura rei* from being (the second condition) and thus cannot be a property of being.[60]

In reply to the problem of the transcendental properties of being Scholasticism had developed two different models, as Suárez establishes. The first model, which strictly applies the conditions of a real property to the properties of being, is Duns Scotus's: being has real and positive properties, because metaphysics is a real science and therefore demonstrates real properties of its subject. These properties are distinguished from being *ex natura rei* and are consequently in themselves not intrinsically and essentially beings (*entia*).[61] The other model is the view that Aquinas advances in *De veritate*. He rejects the "property model": being has *no* real properties, because the *ratio* of

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[58] Cf. R. Darge, "Die Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Theorie der transzendentalen Eigenschaften des Seienden bei F. Suarez", in: *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 54 (2000), pp. 341–364.

[59] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, III, sect. 1, n. 1 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 103): "Sed fieri non potest ut respectu entis sit aliqua proprietas quae has omnes conditiones habeat".

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] *Ibid.*, n. 2 (p. 103): "Primus [modus dicendi] est, ens habere reales et positivas proprietates ex natura rei ab ipso distinctas, quae tamen in se intrinsece et essentialiter entia non sunt. Sumitur ex Scoto (…)".

being is included in the properties. That which is attributed to being as its property adds only a negation or a thought relation (*respectum rationis*) to it. This model of a conceptual addition is, strictly speaking (*in rigore*), true according to Suárez, but needs explication.[62]

2. Suárez unfolds his own solution of the problem in three theses. The first one rejects Scotus's model and claims that the Aristotelian structure of a science must be modified in the case of a transcendental science: "Being as being *cannot* have true, completely real and positive attributes that are distinct *ex natura rei* from it". The "most powerful foundation" of this thesis is Aquinas's observation in *De veritate* (q. 1, a. 1) that being *as being* cannot be outside the essence of some being. Therefore, no property can be real, if being is not essentially included in it; hence, a property cannot be distinct *ex natura rei* from being.[63]

What are the transcendental properties or attributes then, if they are no "real" properties of being? Suárez takes "attribute" in a wider sense; he makes a distinction between a predicate that is a real property and what is predicated in the manner of a property or attribute—in the latter way the theologians speak of the divine "attributes" or perfections. An attribute in this wider sense is distinguished from the subject, but does not require a real distinction; a rational distinction between subject and property suffices.[64]

An attribute in this wider sense is presupposed in Suárez's second thesis: "Being qua being has some properties or attributes which are not constructs of the mind (*per rationem conficta*), but are truly and really (*in re ipsa*) predicated of it".[65] The consideration that the so-called "properties" of being are not fictitious beings is directed against

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[62] *Ibid.*, n. 4 (p. 104): "Tertia sententia est, ens non habere reales passiones positivas; sed omnia illa, quae attribuuntur enti tanquam passiones ejus, addere ipsi enti solum negationem aliquam, vel respectum rationis. Haec est sententia D. Thomae, dict. q. 1 *De verit.*, art. 1, et q. 21, art. 1 (…), et in rigore est vera, indiget tamen explicatione".

[63] *Ibid.*, n. 8 (p. 105): "His positis, dico primo ens ut ens non posse habere veras et omnino reales passiones positivas ex natura rei ab ipso distinctas. Haec est sententia D. Thomae, citatis locis, qui recte advertit, sermonem esse de ente in quantum ens. (…) ens autem in quantum ens non potest esse extra essentiam alicujus entis; et ideo nulla proprietas vel passio potest esse realis, quin in ea essentialiter includatur ens; et ideo non potest esse ex natura rei distincta ab ente; (…) et hoc est potissimum fundamentum conclusionis".

[64] *Ibid.*, n. 5 (p. 104).

[65] *Ibid.*, n. 10 (p. 106): "Dico secundo, ens in quantum ens habere aliquas proprietates seu attributa, quae non sunt per rationem conficta, sed vere et in re ipsa de illo praedicantur".

Scotus, who had suggested that the character of metaphysics as a real science requires properties *ex natura rei* distinct from being. If the distinction between them is merely conceptual, the implication is *not*, however, that these attributes are beings of reason or fictitious beings.

Suárez's third thesis consists of two parts. The first part explains the "addition" to being in a Thomistic vein. "These [transcendental] attributes of being formally add to being either a negation or a denomination taken from a relation to something extrinsic". This conclusion is the result of a process of exclusion. The transcendental properties are not synonymous with being, for otherwise it would be nugatory to say that being is "one" or "good". The reason for their different signification, however, cannot be that the properties signify an entity added to being; they only add something conceptually distinct from being.

The second part of the third thesis emphasizes the metaphysical importance of the transcendental attributes: "Through them the real, positive perfection of being is explicated (*explicatur*)".[66] Although the attributes formally add a negation (in the case of "one") or an extrinsic denomination (in the case of "true" and "good") to "being", what is explicated through them is the nature of being (*natura entis*) with respect to its perfection or integrity.[67] The conceptual addition to being proves to be an "explication" of being.

Jorge Gracia has interpreted Suárez's doctrine of the properties of being in the sense that they "do not have an entitative status in things outside the mind". In this way the modernity of Suárez's doctrine becomes evident, insofar as his view is similar to Kant's conception: the status of the properties is "mental". The transcendental attributes add to being "a denomination founded on a relation of the mind to something extrinsic to the mind". Gracia illustrates this reading with the example of a piece of candy that a person calls "good". "Good" is the denomination or way in which the person thinks about the candy. Ontologically, good is something in the person's mind and not in the

[66] *Ibid.*, n. 11 (p. 106): "Dico tertio: haec attributa entis de formali addunt vel negationem, vel denominationem sumptam per habitudinem ad aliquid extrinsecum; per ea tamen explicatur realis positiva perfectio entis, non secundum aliquid reale superadditum ipsi enti, sed secundum ipsammet formalem seu essentialem rationem entis".

[67] *Ibid.*: "Sic igitur, quamvis haec attributa de formali addant negationes vel alias habitudines, tamen per illas omnes explicatur entis natura, vel quoad perfectionem, vel quoad integritatem, aut aliquid simile".

candy.[68] This interpretation, however, misrepresents Suárez's doctrine. His third thesis presupposes a distinction between what is formally added by the attributes and what is explicated by them. What is explicated by the property "good" is the nature of *being*, the perfection of the thing; what is formally added is the relation to something extrinsic. This addition does not concern what is extrinsic to the human mind, but refers to the relation of being to a faculty of the soul, the appetite.

14.3.2 *Suárez's reduction of the transcendentals*

There are three transcendental properties: unum, verum, bonum

In Disp. III, sect. 2, Suárez examines the number of the transcendental properties. According to what he calls the common view (*communiter*), there are six transcendentals and five properties convertible with "being" (*ens*): *res, aliquid, unum, verum, bonum*. The figure of six transcendentals is typical of Aquinas's doctrine (in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1) and was adopted by Javelli in his *Tractatus de transcendentibus*. Against this view Suárez raises two opposite objections. The common view seems too broad, because *res* and *aliquid* do not have the character of a property. The common view also seems too narrow, because it ignores other *communia*, namely the disjunctive transcendentals introduced by Duns Scotus, such as "finite or infinite", and thought relations (*habitudines rationis*), such as "intelligible".[69]

Suárez maintains that there are three transcendental properties, *unum, verum* and *bonum*, and only these three. The claim that there are no other properties finds support, he suggests, in Aquinas's teaching. Although, in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, Thomas enumerates six transcendental notions, he only deals with "one", "true" and "good", when he discusses the properties of being in particular in his *Summa theologiae* (I, qq. 5, 11 and 16).[70] And in his account of the transcendentals

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[68] J. J. E. Gracia, "The Ontological Status of the Transcendental Attributes of Being in Scholasticsm and Modernity: Suárez and Kant", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, Berlin – New York 1998 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 26), pp. 213–225, in particular pp. 223–225.

[69] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, III, sect. 2, nn. 1–2 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 107).

[70] *Ibid.*, n. 3 (p. 108): "et ideo breviter dicendum est, si proprie loquamur (…), tres tantum esse proprias passiones entis, scilicet, unum, verum et bonum (…)"; n. 4 (p. 108):

in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1, he shows that there can be only three properties of being in accordance with the possible modes of addition to being in general.[71]

Res *and* aliquid *no distinct transcendentals*

The "common" view lists *res* and *aliquid* among the transcendentals, but Suárez argues that they are not distinct transcendental properties and that they can be reduced to the other notions. This reductive analysis is an objective of his doctrine to which he pays much attention.[72]

In his explication of the *ratio* of "being", Suárez had concluded that *ens* (taken as a noun) and *res* are synonyms. From this synonymy he infers that neither is the *passio* of the other—for the relation of subject and property presupposes some difference. If one wants to make a distinction between the two terms in the way Aquinas does in his account of the transcendentals, it appears that the distinction does not fit well into the scheme of a subject ("being") and its property ("thing"). If *res* signifies only the quiddity of a thing, it does not signify a property of being but is the most quidditative predicate. If *ens* only signifies what actually exists, it signifies something outside the essence of a thing, at least in a creature. Yet "being" cannot be a property of "thing", since actual existence is not a property of a creature; it does not proceed from intrinsic principles but from an extrinsic cause and it does not belong to the creature necessarily and *per se*.[73]

Nor is *aliquid* a distinct transcendental property, but it can be reduced to the notions of "being" and "one" in keeping with the

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"Quod autem praeter has non sint aliae, colligi potest ex D. Thomae doctrina; licet enim saepe numeret illa sex transcendentia, eorumque rationem et sufficientiam declaret, (…), tamen, cum in particulari agit de his proprietatibus, nunquam tractat nisi de illis tribus, ut patet ex 1 p., q. 5, 11 et 16, et in dictis Quaestionibus disputatis".

[71] *Ibid.*, n. 7 (p. 109).

[72] Cf. R. Darge, "Suarez' Analyse der Transzendentalien 'Ding' und 'Etwas' im Kontext der scholastischen Metaphysiktradition", in: *Theologie und Philosophie* 75 (2000), pp. 339–356.

[73] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, III, sect. 2, n. 4 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 108): "Potestque in hunc modum declarari ex dictis: nam *res* et *ens* juxta communem usum tanquam synonyma usurpantur, (…) quare neutrum est passio alterius. (…) Quod si velimus haec duo in eo rigore distinguere, quo D. Thomas supra ex Avicenna illa distinxit (…), sic constat, rem non significare passionem entis, sed esse praedicatum maxime quidditativum. Et potius ens significabit aliquid extra essentiam, saltem in creaturis. Tamen etiam ens non poterit dici passio rei; existentia enim non est passio creaturae existentis, vel quia non manat ex principiis ejus intrinsecis, sed ab extrinseco illi provenit (…)".

twofold etymology of the term. If *aliquid* means that which has "some quiddity" (*aliqua quidditas*), it is opposed to "nothing" (*nihil*) or "non-being" and is thus synonymous with "being" (*ens*). If *aliquid* is taken according to the etymology of "another what" (*aliud quid*), to which Aquinas refers, it signifies the negation of identity with another and is included in the notion of "one" (*unum*).[74]

The exclusion of *res* and *aliquid* from the number of transcendentals is primarily directed against Aquinas, although Suárez more than once emphasizes that their exclusion can also be gathered from Aquinas's own account in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1, in which he ignores both notions. Courtine has pointed to the Scotist background of Suárez's reduction: because of his quidditative understanding of being the notions of *res* and *alquid* are for Suárez no longer properties of being, but synonyms of it.[75] This might be true for the notion of *res*, but not for *aliquid*, which is primarily reduced to *unum*.[76]

There are no other transcendental properties

The reductive tendency in Suárez's doctrine is not restricted to two Thomistic properties convertible with being, but also extends to Scotus's expansion of the transcendental domain and to the incorporation of "supertranscendental" concepts. Suárez rejects the suggestion made in the objection that there are *communia* other than those recognized by the "common view", namely the disjunctive transcendentals and thought relations.

What Scotus called "disjunctive transcendentals" are not at all properties of being, but rather "divisions" (*divisiones*), since they contract being as being, and either member of the disjunction is determinate to a special *ratio* of being, such as "finite" and "infinite". Or they signify "diverse states" of the same being, such as "being in act" or "in

[74] *Ibid.*, n. 5 (pp. 108–109).

[75] J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, pp. 376–380.

[76] The priority of this reduction appears from the fact that only the reduction of *aliquid* to "one" is mentioned in the summary in *Disputationes metaphysicae*, III, sect. 2, n. 10 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 110): "Et similiter aliquid, et unum, ex prima impositione distinguuntur, quod unum ex negatione divisionis in se, aliquid vero ex negatione identitatis cum alio dicta sunt; in re vero eamdem passionem significant, quia illa duo ad perfectam unitatem requiruntur".

potency".[77] Suárez's refusal is relatively brief, but pertinent. In contrast to Scotus, he apparently regards predicative commonness as a necessary condition of a transcendental term.

Neither is it necessary to increase the number of transcendental properties by the addition of thought relations. Some people, for instance, hold that "identity" and "diversity" are properties of being, because every being has a relation of identity with itself and a relation of diversity to another being. These relations of reason, however, do not belong *per se* to being, but only extrinsically through a reflexive or comparative act of the mind. If "identity" and "diversity" are considered with respect to their foundation in reality, they are sufficiently contained under the property of "unity". Similarly the denomination "intelligible" can be reduced to "truth", and the denomination "desirable" to "good".[78]

14.4 The transcendental properties of being in particular

Suárez's reduction of the transcendental properties of being to "one", "true" and "good" means a reduction to the original core of the doctrine. In the Disputations IV–XI he deals extensively with these basic terms;[79] we shall not enter into the details of his exposition, but focus on some general aspects. Suárez always determines his position by reviewing the age-long Scholastic discussions. His accounts of *verum* and *bonum* in particular have distinctive features: the rejection of the common relational concept of the "true", the understanding of "good" in terms of *convenientia*, and the interpretation of the two notions as connotative terms.

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[77] *Ibid.*, n. 11 (p. 110): "De illis autem disjunctis, finitum vel infinitum, etc., dicendum est, vel proprie non esse passiones entis in communi, sed potius esse divisiones ejus; quia vel essentialiter contrahunt ipsum ens, quatenus ens est, vel certe neutrum membrum dividens illi convenit, nisi ut contracto seu determinato ad specialem aliquam rationem entis, ut de finito et infinito infra videbimus; vel certe significant diversos status ejusdem entis, ut esse in actu, vel in potentia (…). Vel certe hae proprietates disjunctae reducuntur ad simplices, ut idem vel diversum ad unitatem".

[78] *Ibid.*, n. 14 (p. 111).

[79] Cf. R. Darge, *Suárez' transzendentale Seinsauslegung und die Metaphysiktradition*, pp. 197–385.

14.4.1 *Unity*

Among the three transcendental properties there exists an order, in which "unity" comes first. Suárez gives historical reasons for this priority—Aristotle, in book IV of his *Metaphysics*, connects the "one" immediately with "being"—and systematic reasons—"unity is at most conjoined with entity". "One" is the first property, because it is absolute; it belongs to every being *ex se* and not, as "true" and "good", by extrinsic denomination from something else. And what is absolute is prior to what is relative.[80]

1. Suárez deals with transcendental unity in the fourth Disputation: *De unitate transcendentali in communi*. The first question he raises (sect. 1) concerns the problem of addition: "Whether transcendental unity adds to being something positive or only something privative". The formulated dilemma is a well-known problem in accounts of unity. Most medieval thinkers define the one as that which is "undivided", a determination that goes back to the tenth book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Because the one is defined through a negation and does not add a positive reality to being, Aquinas holds the view that *unum* does not include the aspect of perfection; "it is said solely *secundum rationem negationis*".[81] But if the one has a purely negative character, Thomas's statement in his *Summa theologiae* (I, q. 11, a. 1) that "everything guards its unity as it guards its being (*esse*)" is hardly understandable. Why would things guard something negative? In the Franciscan tradition, as in Bonaventure, for example, a distinction is therefore made between the *ratio intelligendi* of "one" and the *res* which is understood. The *ratio* of "one" is expressed through the privation of division, but with respect to the thing understood, the "one" expresses something

[80] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, IV, prol. (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 115): "Primum de unitate tractandum est, quia cum entitate maxime est conjuncta, et caeteris passionibus quodammodo supponitur (…). Et hunc ordinem servavit Aristoteles, 4 Metaph., unum statim cum ente conjungens". Cf. *ibid.*, III, sect. 2, n. 8 (p. 109): "(…) ex his tribus passionibus unitatem esse primam, quia est absoluta; convenit enim omni enti ex se, et non per denominationem ab alio extrinseco, neque proprie per relationem ad aliud, quam significant aliquo modo verum et bonum, quatenus convenientiam cum alio dicunt; absoluta autem sunt priora respectivis ex genere suo".

[81] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 6, a. 3 ad 1; *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 5 ad 7. Cf. J. Owens, "Unity and Essence in St. Thomas Aquinas", in: *Mediaeval Studies* 23 (1961), pp. 240–59.

positive.[82] Scotus joins this tradition: "One" signifies something positive, for a privation posits no perfection, but unity does.[83]

Suárez starts with referring the positive understanding of "one" and reports two versions of it. The first version holds that "one" adds an accident that always accompanies being and is distinct from being *ex natura rei*, that is, not by an act of the intellect but in reality. Representatives of this conception are Avicenna and Duns Scotus—Suárez rightly mentions them in one breath, for, as we have seen (see ch. 9.5.1), Scotus adopts Avicenna's view of the accidentality of the one. The other version maintains that "one" adds a positive property that is distinct from "being" only by reason (*sola ratione*). Suárez ascribes this conception to Bonaventure.[84]

One of the arguments advanced in support of a positive understanding of "one" claims that it adds a "negation of negation" to "being": "one" signifies the negation of division, and division in its own turn is a negation. Because a double negation expresses an affirmation, "one" consequently means actually something positive.[85] Suárez does not mention the name of Meister Eckhart, who is the most outspoken proponent of this idea (see ch. 8.2.3). Another argument is based on the idea of perfection that is connected with unity. In composed beings, unity arises through the union of a plurality of components, which union is something positive in them. In simple, non-composed beings, unity expresses a positive perfection consisting in the integrity of the thing, which is a higher perfection than union; because of the simplicity of the thing, however, this perfection is explained by us through a negation.[86]

2. Suárez rejects the positive conception of the "one": *unum* does not add anything positive that is distinct from "being" either *ex natura rei*

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[82] Bonaventure, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 24, a. 1, q. 1 (ed. Collegium S. Bonaventurae, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. I, Quaracchi 1882, pp. 420–22). Cf. Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, q. 14 (ed. B. Jansen, Vol. I, Quaracchi 1922 (Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi, 4), p. 271). R. E. Houser, "Transcendental Unity in Petrus de Trabibus", in: *Franciscan Studies* 39 (1979), pp. 49–104.

[83] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, IV, q. 2, n. 80 (ed. The Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera philosophica*, Vol. III, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997, p. 339): "Confirmatur: privatio nullam perfectionem ponit; unitas ponit".

[84] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, IV, sect. 1, nn. 1–2 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 115).

[85] *Ibid.*, n. 2 (p. 115).

[86] *Ibid.*, n. 3 (p. 116).

or only by reason. It is, he observes, the view of Aristotle, Aquinas, and many other Scholastics.[87] Because he has already refused Scotus's model in his general analysis of the properties of being (in Disp. III), Suárez's criticism is focused on Bonaventure's version of the positive addition of the "one" to "being". He argues that if the mind prescinds "unity" from any being, in the remaining concept of "being" all that is necessary for unity would be conceived, namely the negation of division. Hence, every later positive addition, even by reason, is superfluously constructed (*fictum*).[88]

The arguments propounded in support of a positive conception of "one" are not convincing to Suárez's mind. The claim that "one" adds a negation of negation and, consequently, something positive is not correct. It is true that "one" signifies the negation of division, not, however, the negation of a negation. "Division" can have a negative sense ("A is not B"), but can also mean something positive ("A and B are complete, distinct entities"), which is the foundation of division in the negative sense. The term "one" negates division in the latter, positive sense.[89] The argument based on the idea of perfection is not conclusive, because it does not prove that "one" adds something positive to "being", since the entire positive perfection pertains to the entity of the thing, not to its unity.[90]

It is obvious that Suárez holds the traditional negative conception of the transcendental "one": *unum* adds a negation to being; it signifies that being is undivided.[91] His account of unity is more conspicuous for its systematic nature than for its originality. Suárez makes some clarifications that specify the negation added by "one": it expresses a negation "in the manner of a privation (*per modum privationis*)". What is added is not a pure negation, because the negation of division as such can also be attributed to non-being, whereas "one" expresses a negation in real being. It is rather a privation, which is a negation in a real subject, not, however, a pure privation, which is a negation in a subject capable of division, since not every being, such as, for instance,

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[87] *Ibid.*, n. 6 (pp. 116–117).
[88] *Ibid.*, n. 11 (p. 118).
[89] *Ibid.*, n. 21 (p. 121); n. 23 (p. 122): "Vel certe dici potest unum dicere negationem divisionis, non ut dicit formaliter negationem, sed ut dicit fundamentum illius divisionis, quod aliquid positivum est".
[90] *Ibid.*, n. 24 (p. 122).
[91] *Ibid.*, n. 12 (p. 118): "Dico secundo, unum addere supra ens negationem aliquam per modum privationis".

the divine being, has this aptitude. For that reason one has to say that the negation added by "one" is "in the manner of a privation", because it somehow imitates a privation.[92]

3. In the second section of Disp. IV, Suárez examines the question "Whether *unum* formally signifies the mere negation that it adds to being or something else", namely the entity of a thing.[93] This question is not only relevant for "one", but of general importance for understanding the relation of the transcendental *passiones* to being: does a transcendental property include being in its formal concept? Suárez had postponed its treatment, when he explained his general doctrine of the properties of being in the third Disputation.[94]

He reports that there are two opinions on this issue: the first holds that "one" formally signifies only a negation; the other more common view maintains that "one" also signifies the entity under that negation, that is, as undivided. Suárez clearly prefers the second opinion, because the transcendental "one" does not express something that is adventitious to a thing; the thing is rather "one" through its entity. It is an indication that "one" does not formally signify the mere negation added to being, but rather the intrinsic undivided entity itself.[95]

14.4.2 *Truth*

1. After his exposition on unity Suárez examines the property truth in the eighth Disputation: *De veritate seu vero, quod est passio entis*.[96] His account of what transcendental truth adds to being consists of a negative part and a positive part. In the first, critical part, he examines

[92] *Ibid.*, n. 19 (p. 120).

[93] *Ibid.*, sect. 2 (pp. 122–125): "Utrum unum formali dicat solam negationem, quam addit supra ens, vel aliquid aliud".

[94] Cf. *Ibid.*, III, sect. 1, n. 11 (p. 106): "(…) sub controversia positum est, an formaliter seu in abstracto haec attributa dicant solam negationem seu relationem, vel includant entitatem ipsam, quod melius in singulis passionibus explicabitur".

[95] *Ibid.*, IV, sect. 2, n. 6 (p. 124); n. 7 (p. 124): "Atque hinc sumi potest tertium argumentum, quia unum prout est transcendens non dicit de formali aliquid supponens ens, et quasi adjacens, et adveniens illi (…); est enim [res] una intime per suammet entitatem (…); ergo signum est, unum non dicere de formali solam negationem, quasi superadditam entitati, sed ipsam intrinsecam entitatem indivisam".

[96] Cf. H. Seigfried, *Wahrheit und Metaphysik bei Suárez*, Bonn 1967 (Abhandlungen zur Philosophie, Psychologie und Pädagogik, 32). R. Darge, *Suárez' transzendentale Seinsauslegung*, pp. 263–312 ("the transcendental true").

a number of conceptions and raises weighty objections to them. His most extensive discussion is concerned with the opinion that truth adds to being "the relation of conformity to the intellect".[97] It is the most influential conception, for, as Suárez observes in the prologue of the Disputation, "truth" is commonly understood as "an adequation or conformity between thing and intellect".

The "relational" conception of truth has various versions, which all can find some support in Aquinas's writings. One opinion holds that the relation of truth is a relation of reason (*relatio rationis*)—a view suggested by Thomas's statement in *De veritate* q. 21, a. 1, that "'true' and 'good' add only a relation of reason to 'being'". But Suárez adduces several objections to this opinion. If truth is a property of real being, it cannot consist in a relation of reason, for such a relation is a being of reason (*ens rationis*). Moreover, a relation of reason arises through a reflexive act of the intellect, but a concrete being, for example, gold, is "true" prior to any reflexive act. Another argument shows the changed understanding of transcendentality in comparison to Aquinas, for it takes the divine being as standard. God is from eternity true in a transcendental sense (*transcendentaliter*) according to the complete and precise *ratio* of truth, and yet he does not require relations of reason in order to be a true God.[98]

Another version of the "relational" conception asserts that transcendental truth requires a real relation to something. Aquinas's consideration in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 2, seems to suggest this view. There he teaches that the relation of conformity to the divine intellect is essential for the truth of things, for the criterion (*mensura*) for the truth of things can only be an intellect that is the exemplary cause of them. But Suárez denies that transcendental truth requires such a relation. Created being is intelligible by virtue of its entity and can be conceived as a true being, even if one prescinds from the relation to the divine intellect.[99]

Another opinion holds that transcendental truth is only an extrinsic denomination—Suárez refers to Cajetan, but this idea goes back to Aquinas's thought (in his *Summa theologiae* I, q. 16, a. 1) that the

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[97] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, VIII, sect. 7, n. 9 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 298).

[98] *Ibid.*, n. 11 (p. 298): "Item Deus ab aeterno est verus transcendentaliter secundum completam et exactam rationem veritatis, et tamen nec fingit relationes rationis, nec illas requirere potest, ut verus Deus sit et dicatur".

[99] *Ibid.*, nn. 12–13 (p. 299) and n. 15 (p. 300).

true is primarily in the intellect and is only in the thing known, insofar as this thing is thought to be in relation to the intellect by which it is known.[100] Suárez considers this opinion correct in some respect, namely, insofar as "true" adds only "the concomitance of something extrinsic" to "being", as he will show in the positive part of his account. But the view that things are true *only* by extrinsic denomination is not acceptable; truth signifies something intrinsic to things.[101]

2. The outcome of the *pars destruens* of his account is that Suárez distances himself from the common relational concept of the true. He next unfolds his own position in four conclusions. This constructive part concretizes the claim in his general doctrine of the properties of being (see 14.3.1) that "these [transcendental] attributes of being formally add (…) a denomination taken from a relation to something extrinsic; yet through them the real, positive perfection of being is explicated".

Suárez's first conclusion repeats the last part of this statement, in which the metaphysical importance of the transcendental properties is expressed: the *veritas transcendentalis* signifies the real entity of a thing and does not add something intrinsic to it, either absolute or relative.[102] "Truth" as *passio entis* does not designate a new perfection of being, but explicates its nature under a certain aspect.

Whereas the first conclusion refers to the ontological basis of transcendental truth, Suárez's second conclusion explains its character as truth and presents the alternative for his rejection of an understanding of truth as a relation to the intellect. "Transcendental truth signifies the entity of a thing by connoting the knowledge or concept of the intellect, to which that entity is conformed or in which it is represented or can be represented as it is".[103] This thesis appeals to the model of connotation that had been introduced in the fourteenth century

[100] *Ibid.*, n. 19 (p. 301); the reference to Aquinas is made in n. 3 (p. 296).

[101] *Ibid.*, n. 21 (p. 302): "Haec sententia quantum ad aliquid clara est, nimirum, qiod verum supra ens non addit nisi concomitantiam alicujus extrinseci, ut infra ostendemus; quatenus vero dicit res solum per denominationem extrinsecam denominari veras, videtur haec sententia difficilis".

[102] *Ibid.*, n. 24 (p. 303): "(…) dico primo, veritatem transcendentalem intrinsece dicere entitatem realem ipsius rei, quae vera denominatur, et praeter illam nihil ei intrisecum, neque absolutum, neque relativum, neque ex natura rei, nec sola ratione distinctum, addere".

[103] *Ibid.*, n. 25 (p. 303): "Dico secundo, veritatem transcendentalem significare entitatem rei connotando cognitionem seu conceptum intellectus, cui talis entitas conformatur, vel in quo talis res repraesentatur, vel repraesentari potest prout est".

(Ockham) for the explanation of the identity and difference between being and the transcendental terms convertible with it (see ch. 11.1.3). "True" is a connotative term: it primarily signifies the entity of a thing, it connotes or signifies secondarily something else.

What is connoted is something extrinsic, the knowledge of the intellect in which the conformity to the thing is realized. Suárez describes the connotation added by the "true" to "being" with a series of terms: the "mutual connection" of thing and concept (*connectio*), "conjunction" (*conjunctio*), "consort" (*consortium*) and "concomitance" (*concomitantia*). What is connoted does not consist, he again and again underlines, in a relation in the proper sense. But Suárez acknowledges that the "mutual connection" of thing and concept is usually conceived in the manner of a relation and designated as a relation of reason. He accepts the common definition of truth as "the conformity between intellect and thing", if understood according to the connotation model. The conformity is not some relation but a denomination taken from the *consortium* of several things, of which one is such as it is represented by the other.[104]

The third conclusion clarifies the character of truth by examining the various kinds of conformity that truth expresses. It states that the *veritas transcendentalis* can be explicated by means of an "aptitudinal" (*aptitudinalis*) or an actual conformity, and in relation to the divine intellect or to the created intellect. "Truth" can be explained by an "aptitudinal" conformity to the intellect, because every real being is apt to bring about a true idea of itself, in virtue of which it is called "intelligible". Suárez attributes a special importance to this kind of conformity, since it applies to both the divine and the created intellect. If transcendental truth is taken in its full extension, it signifies conformity to every intellect, and the aptitudinal conformity meets this condition.[105]

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[104] *Ibid.*

[105] *Ibid.*, n. 26 (p. 304): "Dico tertio, hanc veritatem transcendentalem posse, et per modum aptitudinalis, et per modum actualis conformitatis explicari, et in ordine ad intellectum divinum, et ad creatum (…)"; n. 29 (p. 305): "haec conformitas quam dicit veritas, potest non solum de actuali, sed etiam de aptitudinali intelligi; at vero secundum aptitudinem, omne ens natum habere veram sui aestimationem in omni intellectu non solum divino, sed etiam creato"; n. 30 (p. 305): "Ergo verum transcendentale in tota sua latitudine sumptum non potest dicere conformitatem ad intellectum ut ad causam vel ad mensuram, sed tantum ut ad repraesentantem seu cognoscentem, vel actu, vel aptitudine. Hoc ergo modo talis conformitas praesertim aptitudinalis, in ordine ad quemcunque intellectum sumi potest".

The fourth conclusion is a reaction to the opinion Suárez had critically discussed in the first part of his account, namely that truth is "an extrinsic denomination", and seeks a balance between what is intrinsic and what is extrinsic to the concept of truth. "This transcendental truth is not a merely extrinsic denomination, although it includes in a sense or connotes the conjunction of something else, from which the denomination results". The impossibility of a merely extrinsic denomination follows from the first conclusion, which maintains that transcendental truth intrinsically includes the entity of a thing, and from the fact that the intelligibility of a thing is consequent upon its entity. That a being is "intelligible" presupposes not only an *extrinsic* faculty that has the power of understanding but also an *intrinsic* aptitude in being itself to the end term of the act of this potency.[106]

14.4.3 *Goodness*

The ratio *of good*: Convenientia

1. The last transcendental property is dealt with in the tenth Disputation: *De bono seu bonitate transcendentali*. In sect. 1 where it is inquired what "good" is, Suárez follows the same strategy as with respect to "true": he criticizes various opinions on the *ratio* of the transcendental good in the Scholastic tradition, particularly in Thomism. Among the Thomas commentators, the issue of whether the concept of "good" is relational or absolute was controversial, because both positions could find support in Aquinas's texts. In his account in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, he had argued that "good" belongs to the "relational" transcendentals: it expresses the *convenientia* or "conformity" of being with the appetite; and in q. 21, a. 1, he had interpreted "good" as a relation of reason, namely as adding the relation of that which perfects (*respectum perfectivi*) to "being". In his later exposition in the *Summa theologiae* I (q. 5, a. 1), however, Aquinas had taught that good and being are

[106] *Ibid.*, n. 34 (pp. 306–307): "Dico ultimo, hanc veritatem transcendentalem non esse meram denominationem extrinsecam, quamvis includat aliquo modo seu connotet conjunctionem alterius rei, unde illa resultat. (…) ergo similiter in ente quatenus intelligibile est, non solum intelligitur facultas extrinseca, quae vim habet intelligendi, quamvis haec necessaria sit, sed etiam ex parte ipsius entis supponitur aptitudo intrinseca, ratione cujus potest actum hujusmodi terminare".

convertible, because *bonum* is identical with *perfectum* and a thing is perfect, insofar as it is in act.[107]

Suárez rejects both the relational conception of "good" (which exists in two versions) and the absolute conception (which also exists in two versions): "Good" does not express (a) a relation of reason or (b) a real relation added to "being"; nor does "good" signify (c) an absolute property formally distinct from "being", which was the view of Scotus, or express (d) the intrinsic perfection of a thing. The intention of this "deconstruction" is to make room for another model of interpretation in the second part of Suárez's account of the good.[108]

He refuses the opinion that goodness only expresses a conceptual relation (*relatio rationis*) of agreement or suitability (*convenientia*) with another on the same general grounds as he rejects the relational conception of truth. This view is not acceptable because of its denial that the properties of being include entity in their formal concept as well as because of the claim that a relation of reason is a property of being.[109]

More specific is Suárez's analysis of the understanding of *bonum* in terms of what is "desirable" (*appetibile*), a notion typical of the relational character of the transcendental good and suggested by the definition mentioned at the beginning of Aristotle's *Ethics*, "the good is what all desire (*bonum est quod omnia appetunt*). Suárez examines the relation between "good" and "desirable" on the basis of a distinction made by the Dominican Cajetan (d. 1534) in his commentary on Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. "Good" and "desirable" can be

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[107] For the development in Aquinas's thought on "the good", R. Te Velde, "The Concept of the Good according to Thomas Aquinas", in: W. Goris (ed.), *Die Metaphysik und das Gute. Aufsätze zu ihrem Verhältnis in Antike und Mittelalter, Jan A. Aertsen zu Ehren*, Leuven 1999 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales. Bibliotheca, 2), pp. 79–103. For the commentary tradition, J.-L. Solère, "Une passion de l'être. Les discussions sur le bien transcendantal dans les commentaires de la Somme théologique—Ia p, q. 5, a. 1—à la Renaissance", in: B. Pinchard (ed.), *Fine follie ou la catastrophe humaniste. Etudes sur les transcendantaux à la Renaissance*, Paris 1995 (Le savoir de Mantice, 1), pp. 33–52.

[108] Cf. J. J. E. Gracia / D. Davis, *The Metaphysics of Good and Evil According to Suárez. Metaphysical Disputations X and XI and Selected Passages from Disputation XXIII and Other Works*, München 1989. R. Darge, *Suárez' transzendentale Seinsauslegung*, pp. 313–385 ("the transcendental good"). J. Uscatescu Barrón, *Der Begriff des Guten in der mittelalterlichen Philosophie von Avicenna bis Suárez. Eine Untersuchung im Spannungsfeld von Ontologie, Ethik und Theologie*, Freiburg 2010 [unpublished Habilitation Thesis], pp. 383–554.

[109] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, X, sect. 1, nn. 1–2 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, pp. 328–329).

considered in two ways, *fundamentaliter* and *formaliter*. "Fundamentally", the good is desirable, for the cause and immediate reason whereby a thing can move the appetite is its goodness; something is desirable because it is good. "Formally", however, "good" is not identical with "desirable" and its *ratio* does not consist in desirability; "desirable" is rather an extrinsic denomination. The relation between the good and desirable is comparable with the relation between the colored and the visible: the colored is the foundation of visibility but is not formally the visibility, which is an extrinsic denomination taken from the object of sight.[110]

The opinion that explains the ontological good to a large extent, though not completely, is to Suárez's mind the view that goodness expresses nothing other than the intrinsic perfection of a thing; *bonum* and *perfectum* are the same. This opinion needs, however, completion in two respects. First, it does not express the difference between "good" and "being". "Good" does not appear as a *passio* of being, which requires a distinction between subject and property, but rather as its essence. If the *ratio* of "good" is "perfect", the *ratio* of "good" is not formally different from that of "being", because the perfection signified by "good" includes being in its act of being. Another reason for the necessity of a distinction between "being" and "good" is the fact that one and the same feature is said to be good for one being and evil for another, even though it concerns the same absolute perfection.[111] An example in late medieval texts that illustrates the case is poison, which is good for the serpent but evil for a human being.

2. If the concept of the good is neither relational nor absolute, what is it then? Suárez's thesis is that "'good' can only add to 'being' the *ratio* of 'suitability' or 'agreement' (*convenientia*)". The thesis continues: "This is not properly a relation, but only connotes in another a nature having a natural inclination, capacity, or conjunction with such perfection". He concludes that goodness expresses the very perfection of a thing, connoting the mentioned suitability.[112]

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[110] *Ibid.*, n. 19 (pp. 334–335). Cf. Cajetan, *In Summam theologiae I[a] Commentaria*, q. 5 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia*, Vol. IV, Rome 1888, p. 57).

[111] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, X, sect. 1, nn. 9–11 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, pp. 331–332).

[112] *Ibid.*, n. 12 (p. 332): "Dicendum ergo est, bonum supra ens solum posse addere rationem convenientiae, quae non est proprie relatio, sed solum connotat in alio talem naturam habentem naturalem inclinationem, capacitatem, vel conjunctionem cum tali

Suárez's new understanding of the "good" consists in the combination of three elements, perfection, connotation and suitability. The first element incorporates the core of the opinion which conceives goodness as the ontological perfection of a thing. By its second element, the idea of connotation, Suárez's thesis asserts the non-identity of "being" and "good". Connotation, he observes, is sufficient to maintain some conceptual distinction founded in things between "good" and "being", with the result that "good" may be attributed to being as a property and is not a synonym of it.[113]

What is connoted by the concept of "good" is the notion of *convenientia*: the "good" adds the aspect that it is suitable or agreeable to "being". Suárez emphasizes that *convenientia* is not a relation in the proper sense; it is rather the condition of any relation, but this claim is not self-evident, for the notion seems to express some kind of correlation or agreement. Just as the connotative interpretation of the transcendental "true" serves as a basis for Suárez's non-relational understanding of this term, the connotative interpretation of the transcendental "good" has a similar function: it indicates that "good" signifies a "conjunction" or "coexistence" of things without implying the category of relation. "Good" primarily signifies the perfection of being, and connotes the *convenientia* in another thing, which has a connatural inclination or capacity to the perfection that is primarily signified. The notion of *convenientia* thus renders intelligible that something can be good and perfect for one thing and evil for another, since what is connoted in the thing for which it is said to be "good" is a connatural inclination, and what is connoted in the thing for which the same is said to be "evil" is a contrary inclination.[114]

Suárez's explanation of the good in terms of *convenientia* has predecessors. His account displays several striking parallels with that of Peter Auriol, whose name, however, is not mentioned in this context.[115] Auriol rejects the traditional Thomistic view that the concept of "good" is identical with that of "desirable" (*appetibilis*). Desirability is the effect of the *ratio* of "good", just as "visibility" is the effect of

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perfectione; unde bonitas dicit ipsam perfectionem rei, connotando praedictam convenientiam, seu denotationem consurgentem ex coexistentia plurium".

[113] *Ibid.*

[114] *Ibid.*

[115] Cf. R. Darge, "*Omne ens est conveniens*. Ursprung und Entwicklung eines spätmittelalterlichen Neuansatzes der Theorie des ontischen Gutseins", in: *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 50 (2005), pp. 9–27.

"being colored", which is the formal object of sight.[116] Auriol's positive conclusion is that the *ratio* of "good" formally consists in the concept of "suitable" (*conveniens*). The two concepts always go together, as the example of poison makes clear: poison is good for the serpent, because it is suitable for and perfects the serpent, but is not good for man, because it is unsuitable for him.[117] As we have seen, Suárez links up with this idea in his argumentation for an understanding of the good in terms of *convenientia*.

A difference between the two thinkers, however, is that Auriol conceives "suitability" as a relation and, consequently, advances this relational character as an objection to the transcendentality of the good: If the "good" is identical with "suitable", this notion does not belong to the *transcendentia*, for "suitable" expresses a relation, and relation is a determinate category (see ch. 10.1.3). Auriol's solution appeals to the doctrine of the connotative terms and distinguishes between the primary and secondary signification of the "good". Suárez denies that *convenientia* is a relation in the proper sense, but this does not mean that this concept does not cause problems for the transcendentality of the good.

Is every being conveniens?

In section 3 of Disputation X, dealing with the convertibility of good and being, Suárez points out two problems. The first difficulty is how the transcendental good is related to the two forms of good that are traditionally distinguished, namely what is good in itself (*bonum in se*) and what is good for another (*bonum alteri*). Against his account of the "good" in terms of *convenientia*, Suárez had raised the objection that this explanation does not seem to be adequate, for it applies only to the latter form of good, not to what is good in itself.[118] A reply

[116] Peter Auriol, *In II Sententiarum*, d. 35, q. unica, a. 1 (ed. Rome 1605, p. 294–295): "Utrum ratio boni consistit formaliter in ratione convenientis".

[117] *Ibid.* (p. 295b): "Illud est formaliter ratio boni, quo posito circa aliquid statim sibi attribuitur ratio boni; sed pone in quocunque volueris rationem convenientis et perfectionis, statim habet rationem boni, tolle etiam quod conveniat aliter et remaneat nec congruens et perficiens, statim deficit ab illa ratio boni: ergo. (…) Minor probatur: Venenum, eo quod congruit serpenti et perficit ipsum, ideo est sibi bonum; e contra autem, quia non competit homini, immo est ei disconveniens, ideo non est bonum homini".

[118] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, X, sect. 1, n. 13 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, pp. 332): "Una tantum superest difficultas, quia hoc modo non adaequate, sed tantum

to this objection had suggested that the good, which is a property of being, can only be what is good for another, for in this way good is distinguished from being and accrues to every being, even the most perfect. Suárez observes that some authors consequently take the transcendental good in the sense of what is good for another—he refers to the Thomists Hervaeus Natalis (d. 1323), Durand of St. Pourçain (d. 1334) and Johannes Capreolus. But they do not explain, Suárez also finds, how good as such (*bonum ut sic*) is convertible with being.[119]

The second difficulty arises from the opinion, whose adherents Suárez does not mention, holding that the good taken in the sense of what is good for another cannot be a property of being, since it has a greater extension than being. Good in this sense is "more than transcendental" (*plus quam transcendens*), for it is said not only of beings but also of non-beings, as it appears from what Christ says about Judas in Matthew 26,24: "It would have been good for that man not to have been born". The very non-being or not having been born is called "good" by Christ.[120]

With respect to the latter difficulty, Suárez argues that "good" and "being" are coextensive and claims that "good properly said presupposes or includes being or is founded on being". The reason is that good, whether it signifies what is good in itself or what is good for another, includes perfection intrinsically in its concept, for "good" and "perfect" are the same. But no true perfection can be understood without entity, since what has no entity is nothing.[121] Suárez therefore rejects the view that "good" has a wider extension than "being". If a privation or negation of being is said to be suitable for something,

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ex parte ratio boni explicatur; nam (…) bonum dupliciter de rebus dici solet, vel quia res in se bona est, vel quia est bona alteri. (…) At vero praedicta ratio boni, ut a nobis explicata est, solum convenit rei, ut dicitur bonum alterius".

[119] *Ibid.*, n. 14 (p. 333); *Ibid.*, sect. 3, n. 2 (p. 347): "Supponenda est distinctio superius tradita de bono, prout absolute dicitur de re, quatenus in se bona est, vel quatenus dicitur bona alteri, seu respectu alterius. De his enim variae sunt opiniones. Quidam enim existamant bonum transcendens prout est passio entis, sumi posteriori modo sub ratione convenientis alteri, quod sentiunt Hervaeus, Capreol. et Durand. supra, non tamen declarant quomodo bonum ut sic cum ente convertatur". A similar view has also been advanced by modern scholars. Cf. C. Esposito, "Das Seiende und das Gute. Francisco Suárez zwischen Thomas von Aquin und Martin Heidegger", in: P.-L. Coriando (ed.), *Vom Rätsel des Begriffs. Festschrift für F.W. von Hermann zum 65. Geburtstag*, Berlin 1999 (Philosophische Schriften, 36), pp. 341–356.

[120] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, X, sect. 3, nn. 1–2 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, pp. 346–347).

[121] *Ibid.*, n. 3 (p. 347).

this does not mean that a privation and a negation are good in reality; they are rather a lack of some evil and a kind of necessary condition enabling a thing to have its goodness and perfection. If a privation suitable for a thing can be designated as "good", one has to realize that similarly a privation can be called "being", as in the proposition "This man is blind". "Is" does not refer here to extramental being, but means "being as true" or intramental being.[122]

With respect to the first difficulty, that is, the objection that an understanding of "good" in terms of *conveniens* is not transcendental since it only holds for what is good for another, Suárez shows that every being is good in the sense of suitable, since *conveniens* includes "good" in its both forms of what is good in itself and of what is good for another.[123] It is true that this conclusion is more manifest in the latter form of good, but even what is said to be good absolutely is called *conveniens* because it has a perfection suitable to itself. "Good" then formally signifies perfection in a thing, connoting in the *same* thing a capacity for or a natural connection with such perfection. Suárez extends the idea of suitability to include that which is *sibi ipsi conveniens*; the concept does not necessarily require a distinction in reality.[124]

14.5 Unity, analogy and univocity

1. Suárez divides his *Disputations* into two volumes. After the transcendental explication of being in the first tome, which contains the discussion of its common concept and the three properties convertible with it, the second volume starts in Disp. XXVIII with the "descent into definite concepts of being". The partition of the work into two volumes thus corresponds with a dichotomy as regards content: the examination of the "common and transcendental" *rationes* of being in contrast to that of the "determinate" *rationes*.[125] What does this division mean for the onto-theological unity of Suárez's project? He does

[122] *Ibid.*

[123] *Ibid.*, n. 4–7 (pp. 347–349).

[124] *Ibid.*, sect. 1, n. 18 (p. 334). Cf. *ibid.*, sect. 3, n. 9 (p. 349).

[125] *Ibid.*, XXVIII, prol. (Vol. XXVI, p. 1): "Haec est secunda principalis pars hujus operis; in qua postquam in priori de communi conceptu entis, illiusque proprietatibus, quae de illo reciproce dicuntur, tractatum est, ad definitas rationes entium descendere (…) necessarium est". Cf. *ibid.*, XXXII, prol. (p. 312), for the contrast between "determinatas rationes entium" and "rationes communes, et quasi, transcendentales".

not consider the division of the *Disputations* as the splitting up of metaphysics into two sciences, a *metaphysica generalis* and a *metaphysica specialis*, that had been suggested by fourteenth-century Scotists. Already in the first Disputation (sect. 3, n. 10), he emphasizes that the entire discipline of metaphysics is "one science" (*una scientia*). But what guarantees this unity?

The "descent" into the determinate concepts of being occurs through the division of being in general. The first division is according to Suárez that which divides the totality of being into infinite and finite being. It is the first division, because it is the "most essential" one, insofar as it expresses the formal diversity between real essences that concerns their inner modes of perfection.[126] The first division recalls Scotus's doctrine of the disjunctive transcendentals, of which the most important pair is "finite or infinite". But as we have seen, Suárez had rejected this innovation of the transcendental theory: the disjunctive attributes are no transcendental "properties" (*passiones*), but rather "divisions" (*divisiones*) of being. Consequently, the transcendental dimension cannot assure the unity of the project of metaphysics in the way it does in Scotus. Suárez does not see the division of being into finite and infinite as the completion of the transcendental explication of being and of metaphysics as the *scientia transcendens*.

It is striking, however, that at this crucial juncture of the *Disputationes metaphysicae* Suárez presents his doctrine of the analogical unity of being (Disp. XXVIII, sect. 3: "Whether the division in question is univocal or analogical?") and that in accordance with the medieval idea of a *duplex analogia* he elaborates on this doctrine further in the context of another essential division, that of finite being into substance and accident in Disputation XXXII (sect. 2).[127]

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[126] *Ibid.*, XXVIII, prol. (p. 1): "Diximus autem in superioribus, disp. 4, sect. 4 [*leg.*: 8], primam et maxime essentialem divisionem entis esse in finitum et infinitum secundum essentiam". Cf. *Ibid.*, IV, sect. 8, n. 10 (Vol. XXV, p. 140).

[127] *Ibid.*, XXVIII, sect. 3 (Vol. XXVI, pp. 13–21): "Utrum praedicta divisio univoca sit, vel analoga"; XXXII, sect. 2 (pp. 319–329): "Utrum ens analogice dividatur in substantiam et accidens". From the studies on Suárez's doctrine we mention: W. Hoeres, "Francis Suarez and the Teaching of John Duns Scotus on *univocatio entis*", in: B. M. Bonansea (ed.), *John Duns Scotus, 1265–1965*, Wahington, D.C., 1965 (Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, 3), pp. 263–290. J. P. Doyle, "Suarez on the Analogy of Being", in: *The Modern Schoolman* 46 (1969), pp. 219–249 and pp. 323–341. J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, pp. 521–538 ; id., *Inventio analogiae*, pp. 291–336. E. J. Asworth, "Suárez on the Analogy of Being: Some Historical Background", in: *Vivarium* 33 (1995), pp. 50–75. R. Darge, "Grundthese und

2. The fundamental presupposition of Suárez's account of analogy, which determines his entire approach, is the unity of the concept of being that he had demonstrated in the second Disputation (see 14.2.1). At the end of this Disputation he had even asserted that the unity of the concept of being is much more certain than the claim that being is analogical and that, therefore, it is not right to deny the unity of the concept in defence of analogy.[128] In this respect there is a considerable difference between Aquinas's and Suárez's doctrine of analogy: for Aquinas the analogy of being is the principle of unity in diversity, for Suárez the analogy already presupposes unity.

Suárez's exposition had two objectives. On the one hand, it will show that the thesis of the univocity of being claims too much, insofar as it states that the concept of being is not only one but also univocal. On the other, it will make clear that the conception of the analogy of being, as found in the work of the Thomist Cajetan, claims too much, insofar as it states that the concept of being is not only not univocal but also not one.[129] The primary task is to determine the type of analogy that applies to "being" and is thus compatible with its conceptual unity.

Suárez distinguishes various kinds of analogy; his distinction between a twofold analogy of attribution is relevant here. The first mode occurs when the formality from which the denomination is taken is intrinsic only in one member and is in the other analogates only through an extrinsic relation to the first analogate. An example of an "extrinsic attribution" is the term "healthy", which is said absolutely of an animal and is said of medicine because of the relation it has to the health of the animal. The second mode is present when the formality from which the denomination is taken is intrinsically found in both analogates, although in one absolutely and in the other because of the relationship to that one. An example of an "intrinsic attribution" is "being" said of substance and accident.[130] Suárez illustrates the distinct

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ontologische Bedeutung der Lehre von der Analogie des Seienden nach F. Suárez", in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 106 (1999), pp. 312–333.

[128] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, II, sect. 2, n. 36 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 81).

[129] *Ibid.*, XXVIII, sect. 3, n. 9 (Vol. XXVI, p. 15): "illud tamen semper in eis [*sc.* rationibus] difficile superest, quia vel nimium probant, vel efficaces non sunt, quia nimirum non solum probarent ens non esse univocum, sed etiam non habere unum communem conceptum objectivum Deo et creaturis".

[130] *Ibid.*, n. 14 (pp. 17–18).

modes of analogy by distributing the examples by which Aristotle had clarified the same kind of (*pros hen*) predication.

Between the two types of analogy of attribution there are some significant differences. In the former type a term is attributed to the secondary analogate improperly (*improprie*), in the latter type, however, most properly (*propriisssima*), because the denomination is taken from an intrinsic form. In the analogy of extrinsic attribution there is not one common formal and objective concept, in the analogy of intrinsic attribution there is, because the analogates intrinsically agree in the *ratio* that the mind can abstractly conceive of them. In this kind of analogy, the analogous name can be a means (*medium*) of demonstration as well and thus serve as a basis for scientific knowledge.[131]

Suárez concludes that the analogy of being between God and creature cannot be that of extrinsic attribution, for a creature is not called "being" (*ens*) extrinsically from the being (*esse*) that is in God, but from its own intrinsic being. The analogy between God and creature under the aspect of being (*sub ratione entis*) is an analogy of intrinsic attribution.[132]

3. Suárez's next task is to differentiate between the analogical unity of being and univocity. Against Scotus's thesis of the univocity of being, he denies that the *ratio* of being is altogether the same in finite and infinite being, because the former is being *ab alio* and the latter being *ex se*. The essential diversity is clearly expressed in Aquinas's arguments for the analogy of being: a creature is being "by participation" in that being which is in God "by his essence". Every creature is then a being through a relationship to God; insofar as it has being, it essentially depends on God.[133]

This does not mean, however, that a creature, conceived under the most abstract and confused concept of being, as such entails a relationship to God. If that were the case, Suárez argues, the *ratio* of being in a creature would include something other than the *ratio* of being

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[131] *Ibid.*

[132] *Ibid.*, n. 15 (p. 18); n. 16 (p. 18): "Relinquitur ergo, ut haec analogia seu attributio, quam creatura sub ratione entis potest habere ad Deum, sit posterioris modi, id est, fundata in proprio et intrinseco esse habente essentialem habitudinem seu dependentiam a Deo".

[133] *Ibid.*, n. 16 (p. 19). Cf. *ibid.*, n. 21 (p. 20): "(…) negando rationem entis esse omnino eamdem in ente finito et infinito, nam hoc est ens, quia ex se est, illud vero est ens, quia est ab alio".

in God and, consequently, the concept of being would not be one. If a creature is conceived under the concept of being, it is not conceived as a specific being (*tale ens*) but abstractly and confusedly under the *ratio* of being as such (*ut sic*), that is, as "existing out of nothing".[134] Because the concept of being is *transcendens* and intimately included in all the proper concepts and determinations of beings, the common *ratio* as abstracted is in itself one and the same.[135]

But how is the analogy of being then to be understood? Suárez's reply is the most critical point in his account, since it combines the conceptual unity of being considered as being and the real diversity of a specific being (*tale ens*). He claims that "being itself" (*ipsum ens*), however abstractly and confusedly it is conceived, "by virtue of itself" demands an order or relation to one, to which it belongs first and *per se*, God, and from which it descends to other things. The consequence is that "being" falls short of a univocal term: its concept is not altogether the same since it is not from itself (*ex se*) altogether "uniform". Univocity, however, requires both uniformity and identity; what is univocal is from itself so indifferent that it equally descends into its inferiors. Therefore, "being" is rightly judged to be "analogical" with respect to God and creatures.[136]

4. Suárez's position in the Scholastic debate on the unity of the concept of being proves to be complex. He criticizes dominant conceptions of analogy as well as the thesis of univocity and finally accepts a

[134] *Ibid.*, n. 16 (p. 19): "Quod non est ita intelligendum, ut existimetur creatura, concepta sub abstractissima et confusissima ratione entis ut sic, dicere habitudinem ad Deum; id enim est plane impossibile (…), cum sub eo conceptu non concipiatur creatura, ut ens finitum et limitatum est, sed omnino abstrahatur, et solum confuse concipiatur sub ratione existentis extra nihil".

[135] *Ibid.*, n. 21 (p. 21): "respondetur imprimis rationem entis esse transcendentem, et intime inclusam in omnibus propriis ac determinatis rationibus entium, et in ipsis modis determinantibus ipsum ens, ideoque (…) ratio communis, ut abstracta, sit in se una".

[136] *Ibid.*, n. 17 (p. 19): "ipsum ens quantumvis abstracte et confuse conceptum, ex vi sua postulat hunc ordinem, ut primo ac per se, et quasi complete competat Deo, et per illud descendat ad reliqua, quibus non insit, nisi cum habitudine et dependentia a Deo; ergo in hoc deficit a ratione univoci, nam univocum ex se ita est indifferens, ut aequaliter, et sine ullo ordine vel habitudine unius ad alterum, ad inferiora descendat; ergo ens respectu Dei et creaturarum merito inter analoga computatur". Cf. *ibid.*, n. 21 (p. 21): "Deinde (quod ad rem maxime spectat) ipsamet ratio communis ex se postulat talem determinationem cum ordine et habitudine ad unum, et ideo (…) non est omnino eadem, quia non est ex se omnino uniformis, quam uniformitatem et identitatem requirunt univoca in ratione sua".

form of analogy that is compatible with the conceptual unity of being. Several modern readers are of the opinion that despite his criticism of the univocity claim the main tendency of Suárez's account is in accordance with the Scotist approach. "Although Suárez would not admit it, his investigations largely appear not so much as a refutation of the Scotistic teaching [but] as a defence of it".[137] His demonstration of the conceptual unity of being seems to reflect this tendency.

Yet this aspect should not necessarily be seen as a "concession" to Scotus. It is related to a line of thinkers who held that it was possible for a concept to be both one and analogical.[138] An example could be Peter Auriol, the main critic of Scotus in the fourteenth century (see ch. 10.1.1)—Suárez does refer to him, albeit ambiguously.[139] A crucial difference, however, is that whereas Auriol denies that there is a *distinct* common concept of being, Suárez affirms such a *ratio*. It is this very point upon which the criticism of modern interpreters centers. A fundamental objection they have leveled against his account is that it is inconsistent in defending both the unity and the analogical character of being. How is it possible for the concept of being, which is simple and one, to give rise "by itself" to a different *habitudo ad inferiora*, to finite being and infinite being? Is such a different relation possible without internal differentiation in the concept of being?[140]

One has to realize, however, that Suárez's view on the analogical unity of the concept of being is closely connected with his conception of transcendentality, which is different from Scotus's. In his explanation of analogy, he refers to the transcendental character of being in the same terms he had used in the second Disputation: the concept of being is not in reality prescinded from its *inferiora* and is intimately included in all the proper *rationes* of things. An "excluding precision"

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[137] W. Hoeres, "Francis Suarez and the Teaching of John Duns Scotus on *univocatio entis*", p. 263.

[138] Cf. E. J. Asworth, "Suárez on the Analogy of Being: Some Historical Background", p. 75.

[139] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, XXVIII, sect. 3, n. 1 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXVI, p. 13): "Prima [sententia] est ens, neque univoce, neque analogice dici de Deo et creaturis, sed mere aequivoce. Haec opinio solet attribui Aureolo, in 1, d. 2, q. 1, sed ille non hoc asseruit, sed solum ens non dicere unum conceptum seu rationem communem Deo et creaturis, quod optime consistere posset cum analogia, ut per se constat".

[140] W. Hoeres, "Francis Suarez and the Teaching of John Duns Scotus on *univocatio entis*", pp. 272–273. Cf. D. Heider, "Is Suárez's Concept of Being Analogical or Univocal?", in: *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 81 (2007), pp. 21–42.

(*praecisio*) is not possible in the case of being "because of its transcendentality (*propter transcendentiam*)".

14.6 Conclusion: Suárez's place in the history of metaphysics

The systematic perspective that emerges from Suárez's discussion of the subject of metaphysics, of the common *ratio* of "being" and of the properties convertible with being in the *Disputationes metaphysicae* is the transcendental orientation. This dimension is elaborated in a direct confrontation with Aquinas's and Scotus's models of transcendentality. But how Suárez's own position is to be historically characterized is a controversial issue.

1. Suárez always tries to find support for his views in texts of Thomas Aquinas. The effect is that he sometimes presents his doctrine in a more Thomistic way than it properly is. He suggests, for instance, that Aquinas would have shared his opinion that God is contained under the adequate subject of metaphysics (see 14.1). According to Aquinas, however, *ens commune* is the subject of this science, but God does not fall under it; God is rather the extrinsic cause of being in general. Another telling example is Suárez's account of the *ratio* of being, based on the distinction between being as a participle and being as a noun (see 14.2.2). He again suggests that a similar distinction was made by Aquinas in his second *Quodlibet* (q. 2, a. 1), although in other terms. In this text, Aquinas first distinguishes between two modes of predicating "being" (*ens*): it is predicated "essentially" of God alone and is predicated of every creature "by participation", for a creature is something which has (received) being; *ens* does not belong to its essence. In Suárez's reading, these modes of predication concern being understood as "act", but Thomas would next have recognized another sense, when he adds in the *Quodlibet*: "It is true that the name *ens*, insofar as it means the thing to which *esse* belongs, signifies the essence of a thing and is divided by the ten categories".[141] Yet, unlike Suárez,

[141] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, II, sect. 4, n. 3 (ed. Berton, Vol. XXV, p. 88). Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibet* II, q. 2, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXV, Rome 1996, pp. 214–215): "Dicendum, quod dupliciter aliquid de aliquo predicatur: uno modo essencialiter, alio modo per participationem.

Aquinas does not consider the quidditative sense of being as the primary and transcendental one. His arguments for the convertibility of being with the transcendental properties "one", "true" and "good" are based on an understanding of *esse* as "actuality".

Central elements of Suárez's project, such as his view of the adequate subject of metaphysics and of the common *ratio* of being, follow the Scotist rather than the Thomist conception of metaphysics. In his grand study on the development of metaphysics as *scientia transcendens*, Ludger Honnefelder has concluded that Suárez followed Scotus's model of a transcendental science and thus became a vital link between the Middle Ages and Modern Times. His *Disputationes metaphysicae* appear as the intermediary by which Scotus's conception was passed on to early modern transcendental thought, to Wolff and Kant.[142]

The conclusion that Suárez follows Scotus's model of a transcendental science needs, however, addition and correction. The impact of Aquinas's account of the transcendentals on Suárez is stronger than Honnefelder, who considers the transcendental dimension in Thomas's thought of minor importance, assumes. The Spanish thinker has also been found to be very critical of essential aspects of Scotus's model. He rejects, for instance, Scotus's concept of transcendentality both from an extensional and an intensional point of view. Extensionally, because Suárez regards predicative commonness as a necessary condition of a transcendental term and therefore rejects Scotus's innovation of disjunctive transcendentals. Intensionally, because Suárez holds that the concept of being is intimately included in the properties and differences of being and therefore dismisses Scotus's claim that being cannot be predicated *in quid* of the ultimate differences and its proper attributes as well as his view that the concept of "being" is prescinded *ex natura rei* from its inferiors.

Consequently, Suárez distances himself from Scotus's theory of the transcendental properties of being. Joining Aquinas's considerations in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, he maintains that "being as being cannot have true and real attributes *ex natura rei* distinct from it"; the transcen-

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(…) Secundum ergo hoc dicendum est quod ens predicatur de solo Deo essencialiter (…), de qualibet autem creatura predicatur per participationem: nulla enim creatura est suum esse, set est habens esse. (…) set uerum est quod hoc nomen 'ens', secundum quod importat rem cui competit huiusmodi esse, sic significat essenciam rei, et diuiditur per decem genera".

[142] L. Honnefelder, *Scientia transcendens*, pp. 200–294.

dental properties explicate being under conceptually distinct aspects of its perfection. It is therefore understandable that Rolf Darge, in his thorough analysis of Suárez's metaphysics, comes to the conclusion that the Spanish philosopher realizes a new synthesis. It is "something new" *within* the Scholastic tradition, because his project continues Aquinas's program of a transcendental explication of being on the basis of a Scotist quidditative concept of being.[143]

2. In the same year as Honnefelder's study appeared, another monumental study on Suárez was published by Jean-François Courtine. He recognizes that the systematics underlying the *Disputationes metaphysicae* is the medieval tradition of transcendental thought and pays considerable attention to the Scholastic models, Thomism and in particular the Scotist conception.[144] But he understands the relation of Suárez's metaphysics to "modernity" differently from Honnefelder. He presents Suárez's thought not as an intermediary but as a "turn" ("le tournant suarézien") in the genealogy of Western metaphysics. The *Disputationes* took a decisive step towards the early modern understanding of this discipline, which devised an alternative model of ontology.

One of the features of the early modern understanding is that knowability becomes the ultimate criterion of entity. At the end of this development metaphysics is no longer conceived as a science of (real) being, but as an "onto-logic", as a science of what is thinkable, a theory of "something (Greek: *ti*) in general", which can therefore be characterized as a "tinology".[145] In Courtine's reading, the most significant sign of this transformation is Suárez's identification of *ens* and *res*. The central notion of his ontology becomes a new concept of "reality" (*realitas*), which does not refer to the actual existence of things.[146]

Another feature is connected with the development of early modern metaphysics to a "tinology". Courtine links this transformation with the sixteenth-century doctrine of the "supertranscendentals". In Suárez's "posterity" the term *res*—more in the sense of "something" (*aliquid*)

[143] R. Darge, *Suárez' transzendentale Seinsauslegung und die Metaphysiktradition*, in particular pp. 404–405.

[144] J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*. Incomprehensible, however, is his interpretation (p. 376) that Suárez agrees with the Scotist doctrine of the *passiones entis*.

[145] *Ibid.*, pp. 535–536.

[146] *Ibid.*, p. 537 and pp. 263–264.

than of "thing"—becomes the pre-eminent "supertranscendental". The metaphysics of Modern Times is no longer a "transcendental" theory but a "supertranscendental" science, since its object transcends in generality the traditional *transcendentia*, whose commonness is restricted to real being.[147]

This suggestion of a connection between modernity and the idea of a "supertranscendental" science deserves closer scrutiny (in the next chapter) in two respects. First, with respect to Suárez's metaphysics: how is Courtine's "modernity" claim related to the transcendental systematics of the *Disputations*? As we have seen, the Spanish thinker expressly rejected a "supertranscendental" understanding of the subject of metaphysics in the first Disputation. Secondly, with respect to the history of transcendental thought in general, all the more so because Courtine sees a prefiguration and preparation of the modern turn to a "supertranscendental" understanding of metaphysics in medieval philosophy.

[147] *Ibid.*, p. 537: "Un dernier trait permet de caractériser la métaphysique des modernes, comme ontologie, pour autant qu'elle ne se détermine plus prioritairement comme *scientia transcendens* ou *theoria transcendentalis*, mais plus rigoureusement comme science *surtranscendantale*. Le terme, comme on sait, n'aura pas réussi à s'imposer; il avait pourtant le grand mérite de mettre clairement l'accent sur la *valeur d'objectité* (…). A titre de théorie surtranscendantale, la métaphysique moderne n'est point ontologie, mais bien tino-logie, science génerale (Leibniz) du *cogitabile*, de la chose au sens du 'quelque chose'".

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE DOCTRINE OF THE "SUPERTRANSCENDENTALS": AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL?

15.1 The rise of the doctrine of the *supertranscendentia*

The idea of a "supertranscendental" seems rather grotesque: Why and how should the most common concepts be transcended once again? The notion was introduced by Spanish Scholastics in the sixteenth century, disappeared from the philosophical vocabulary in the eighteenth century, but has been rediscovered in recent scholarship. Its rediscovery professes to be relevant for our understanding of the relation between medieval and modern metaphysics as well as of the history of transcendental thought.

The modern rediscovery of the notion of a "supertranscendental" is mainly due to John P. Doyle, who collected essential materials in a number of studies. He has advanced the intriguing thesis that the concept of supertranscendental being bridges the gap between transcendental in the medieval sense and transcendental in the Kantian sense; it is, as it were, "the missing link".[1] As we have seen in the conclusion of the preceding chapter, J.-F. Courtine gives a place to the notion of a "supertranscendental" in the evolution of Western metaphysics. He sees early modern metaphysics not primarily as a *scientia transcendens*, but rather as a supertranscendental science; the scope of its study is more encompassing than "being", namely the knowledge

[1] Cf. J. P. Doyle, "'Extrinsic Cognoscibility': A Seventeenth Century Supertranscendental Notion", in: *The Modern Schoolman* 68 (1990), pp. 57–80; id., "Between Transcendental and Transcendental: The Missing Link?", in: *The Review of Metaphysics* 50 (1997), pp. 783–815; id., "Supertranscendental Being: On the Verge of Modern Philosophy", in: S. F. Brown, (ed.), *Meeting of the Minds. The Relations between Medieval and Classical Modern European Philosophy*, Turnhout 1998 (Rencontres de Philosophie Medievale, 7), pp. 297–316; id., "Supertranszendent, Supertranszendenz", in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. X, Basel 1998, pp. 644–649; id., "Supertranscendental Nothing: A philosophical Finisterre", in: *Medioevo, Rivista di storia della filosofia medievale* 24 (1998), pp. 1–30.

of "thing" in the sense of "something" or the knowledge of what is "intelligible".

The origin of the doctrine of the supertranscendentals can be traced back to some Spanish Scholastics of the sixteenth century. They hold the view that the level of the transcendental notions, which transcend the categories and thus signify the most universal conditions of real beings, must again be surpassed by still more universal concepts, common to real beings and beings of reason. These concepts are therefore "super-transcendentals" (*supertranscendentia*). The first occurrence of the term is in a manual of logic, composed by one of the main figures of the school of Salamanca, Dominic Soto (1494–1560). In his *Summulae* (1529), he presents "the tree of terms" (*arbor terminorum*), of which one of the branches is the division into *communis* and *singularis*. The "common term" again branches off into *non-transcendens*, *transcendens* and *supratranscendens*. The terms that are called "transcendental", because they signify all things (*omnia*), are six in number, designated by the abbreviation *reubau*, namely, *res, ens, unum, bonum, aliquid, verum*. There are other terms that are called "supertranscendental", because they extend to more things than the transcendentals, such as *imaginabile*.[2]

A similar distinction is found in the work *Institutiones dialecticae*, written by the Portuguese Jesuit Peter Fonseca (1528–1599) and published in 1564. A *nomen transcendens* is any name that is said of "all true things". Among the *non-transcendentia* there are names, such as *opinabilis, cogitabilis* and *apprehensibilis*, which are said not only of true things, but also of any other thing. They are called *supertranscendentia* "by more recent authors" (*a recentioribus*)—but who are they? What a pity Fonseca is not more specific.[3]

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[2] Dominic Soto, *Summulae summularum*, I, c. 6, nn. 4–5 (ed. Salamantica 1554 (*aeditio secunda*) [reprinted in Hildesheim – New York 1980], fol. 10r): "Circa terminum communem adhuc est notandum, esse aliquos terminos universalissimos, quos dialectici vocant transcendentes, quia omnia significent, qui nimirum sunt sex, designati his dictionibus, reu, bau, videlicet, res, ens, unum, bonum, aliquid, verum. (…) Sunt etiam alii termini qui dicuntur supratranscendentes, qui ad plura se extendunt quam transcendentes, ut imaginabile etc.".

[3] Peter Fonseca, *Institutionum dialecticarum libri octo*, I, c. 28 (ed. Ingolstadt 1607, p. 62): "Nomen transcendens, etsi non eadem significatione apud omnes sumitur, tamen iuxta communiorem usurpationem sic definiri potest. Nomen transcendens est, quod de omnibus ac solis veris rebus dicitur. Sex porro transcendentia esse dicuntur, Ens, Unum, Verum. Bonum, Aliquid, et Res (…). Reliqua iuxta hanc sententiam sunt

Dominic Soto and Peter Fonseca introduce the notion of "supertranscendental", when dealing with the divisions of names in their logical treatises. It is noteworthy that Fonseca explicitly denies in his *Metaphysics* commentary that "being" in its most common sense, which includes real being and being of reason, can be the subject of the science of metaphysics.[4] The sixteenth-century logical treatises do not provide insight into the philosophical motives of the doctrine of the supertranscendentals. In this respect the accounts of some seventeenth-century Jesuit thinkers are somewhat more instructive.

According to Thomas Compton Carleton (1591–1666) "supertranscendental" terms are terms that encompass not only "true" beings but also mere fictions and impossible objects. An example of such a supertranscendental term is *intelligibile*.[5] This instance is revealing since it shows that knowability is no longer considered a convertible property of transcendental being, that is, an intrinsic property. In the medieval tradition of transcendental philosophy, the close relation between being and intelligibility—*ens* is the *primum intelligibile*—was expressed by the notion "true". Instead, cognoscibility for Carleton is *extrinsic*, which is to say that it is either through species from other things or by extrinsic denomination from a possible intellect. Such extrinsic intelligibility is something found equally in real beings and beings of reason and thus qualifies as a "supertranscendental" notion.[6]

At the end of the seventeenth century, the Polish Jesuit Maximilian Wietrowski (1660–1737) holds that "supertranscendental being" (*ens supratranscendentale*) embraces real being as well as impossible being and is co-extensive with the concept of *objectum*.[7] Wietrowski

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non transcendentia: in quibus numerantur ea, quae a recentioribus dicuntur Supertranscendentia, ut, Opinabilis, Cogitabilis, Apprehensibilis, et si quae sunt alia, quae non tantum de omnibus rebus veris, sed etiam de quibuscunque aliis vere affirmantur".

[4] Petrus Fonseca, *Commentariorum in Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae*, c. 1, q. 1, sect. 3 (ed. Cologne 1615 [reprinted in Hildesheim 1964], fol. 647).

[5] Thomas Compton Carleton, *Philosophia universa, Logica*, disp. 2, sec. 6, n. 5 (ed. Antwerpen 1649, p. 8): "Termini supertrancendentales sunt qui non de rebus veris tantum, sed etiam de fictis affirmantur, ut intelligibile, imaginabile, unde ut dici solet, latius patet ens imaginabile quam ens possible".

[6] *Ibid.*, disp. 13, sec. 6, n. 2 (p. 70): "Unde ut ostendi in Introductione d. 2, s. 6, n. 5, Intelligibile est terminus supertranscendens". Cf. J. P. Doyle, "'Extrinsic Cognoscibility'", p. 60.

[7] Maximilian Wietrowski, *Philosophia disputata, Logica*, concl. 13, c. 1, n. 1 (ed. Prague 1697, p. 232): "Praeterea, (…) ita etiam datur conceptus Entis abstrahentis a possibili seu reali et impossibili, qui conceptus vocatur *Ens supratranscendentale*:

raises the objection that cognoscibility seems to be a (transcendental) property of being and that consequently what is impossible cannot be cognoscible. To this he replies by distinguishing "transcendental" and "supertranscendental" cognoscibility: "transcendental" cognoscibility is intrinsic, founded upon some intrinsic reality; "supertranscendental" cognoscibility is extrinsic, of itself requiring no intrinsic foundation.[8] The mark of supertranscendentality is "objectivity", the mark of objectivity is cognoscibility or intelligibility. The presupposition of the doctrine of the supertranscendentals is the view that the object of the intellect is more encompassing than transcendental being.

15.2 Early-modern metaphysics and the "supertranscendentals": The missing link?

1. In the first Disputation of his *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, Suárez discusses an opinion that conceives metaphysics as a "supertranscendental" science, for it teaches that the adequate object of metaphysics is "being taken most abstractly" (*ens abstractissime sumptum*) so as to include both real being and being of reason. Suárez rejects this conception and concludes that the adequate object of metaphysics is *ens inquantum ens reale* (see ch. 14.1). He adds "real" to the traditional Aristotelian formula in order to make it perfectly clear that beings of reason (*entia rationis*), as privations and negations, must be excluded from the consideration of this science. The exclusion of *ens rationis* from the domain of metaphysics has a long tradition and goes back to Aristotle, who, in *Metaphysics* VI, c. 4, asserts that "being-as-what-is-true" (*ens ut verum*) or intramental being "must be passed over" by the inquiry of First Philosophy. Suárez's argument for the exclusion is that there is neither a real similarity (*convenientia*) between being of reason and real being nor a concept of being common to both. Like previous authors, as, for instance, William of Ockham, he denies any univocity between *ens reale* and *ens rationis*. Suárez holds it therefore incorrect to list the division into *ens reale* and *ens rationis* among the divisions of being.[9] If it were a real division and not a purely nominal

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talis conceptus Entis tam late patet quam conceptus objecti, seu cognoscibilis, intelligibilis".

[8] Cf. J. P. Doyle, "'Extrinsic Cognoscibility'", pp. 62–64.

[9] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, IV, sect. 7, n. 4 (ed. C. Berton, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXV, Paris 1866, p. 137): "(…) ens rationis (…) non habet communem

one, a comprehensive concept of being should be posited, but what could that be?

It is striking that Courtine credits Suárez with a (supertranscendental) conception of metaphysics, which is explicitly rejected in the first Disputation. According to the French scholar, however, this conception remains a "leitmotiv" for Suárez's project. Evidence for this claim is the fact that the last Disputation (LIV) deals with the beings of reason (*De entibus rationis*), although they had been excluded from the adequate object of metaphysics. This reintroduction seems indeed to be paradoxical, but is, in Courtine's reading, already suggested in the first Disputation. There Suárez acknowledges that metaphysics sometimes considers *entia rationis*, though these do not belong *per se* and *directe* to its object, because a discussion of them can be helpful for an understanding of what "real being" is.[10] Courtine's thesis is that the reintroduction of "beings of reason" in the *Disputationes metaphysicae* is an inner necessity, essential for Suárez's account of the concept of "reality".

Early modern metaphysics is formally the study of being as being, but according to Courtine it can only determine itself as ontology from a fundamental presupposition that is not explained, "the thesis of nothing". The domain of metaphysics is conceived in opposition to "nothing" (as what is "impossible" and "contradictory" in itself). Consequently, the object of this discipline is defined negatively as what is not nothing, that is, what is "something" (*aliquid* or *res*), including both real being and being of reason. The scope of the most general science is broadened to the supertranscendental notion of "intelligible".[11]

2. The clearest proof of this transformation is considered to be the remarkable work of the German Calvinist philosopher Clemens Timpler, *Metaphysicae systema methodicum*, published in 1604. The term *supertranscendentia* itself is not employed, but the idea is there and dominates the discussion of the "*problema*" in the first chapter

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conceptum, nec realem convenientiam cum ente reali, et ideo divisio entis in ens reali et rationis non recte inter divisiones entis numeratur, quia illa magis est divisio nominis quam rei".

[10] Cf. *ibid.*, I, sect. 1, n. 6 (pp. 3–4).

[11] J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, Paris 1990, pp. 246–292 ("*Aliquid-Nihil*. La thèse suarézienne du néant"). Cf. J.-F. Courtine, "Présentation", in his transl. of A. Meinong, *Théorie de l'objet. Présentation personnelle*, Paris 1999, pp. 41–59.

of the first book: "What is the *proprium* and *adaequatum subiectum* of metaphysics?" According to Timpler, "a big controversy" (*magna controversia*) with regard to this traditional question exists among the philosophers. He lists four positions, ordered according to an increasing degree of generality: the subject of this science has been defined either as God alone; or as the incorporeal substance, encompassing God and the spiritual substances; or as every *ens reale*, common to God and creature; or as *omne ens*, both real being and being of reason. In Timpler's view, however, even the last position does not express the entire scope of metaphysics, for this science considers not only being, but also non-being, such as privations and negations. Consequently its subject must be taken in a broader sense.[12] Timpler concludes that the proper and adequate subject of metaphysics is "every intelligible (*omne intelligibile*)".[13]

Intelligibility is not, as some philosophers believe, bound to "being", but is somehow "beyond" (*supra*) being, that is, by implication, a kind of "supertranscendental"—as it is for the Jesuit Carleton. The first and most general division of "intelligible" is into *aliquid* and *nihil*. But how can "nothing" fall under "intelligible"? Timpler argues that this seems to be required by the basic principles of metaphysics, such as the principle of contradiction and the axiom "out of nothing comes nothing" (*ex nihilo nihil fit*). The understanding of such principles presupposes that the terms which they consist of are understood by us. Thus, even "nothing" is somehow intelligible.[14]

Timpler no longer conceives metaphysics as the science of being as being, but takes its proper subject wider in accordance with the supertranscendental notion of "intelligible". The distance from the concept of metaphysics as ontology is also apparent from his rejection of the traditional view that "being" is indefinable, because it is not a

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[12] Clemens Timpler, *Metaphysicae systema methodicum*, I, c. 1, problema 5 (ed. Hanau 1612, pp. 6–7 [1st ed. 1604]): "Magna est controversia inter Philosophos de subiecto proprio et adaequato Metaphysicae. (…) Sed nulla harum quatuor sententiarum videtur penitus exprimere totam rei in Metaphysica consideratae universitatem. Metaphysicus enim non tantum contemplatur ens, sed etiam non ens, adeoque essentiam et privationem entis".

[13] *Ibid.* (pp. 7–8): "Proinde nos latius extendimus rem in Metaphysica consideratam, ut sub ea (…) omne intelligibile comprehendatur, nihilque penitus excludatur eorum, quae in aliorum sententiis desideramus (…) Proinde concludo, *Subiectum proprium et adaequatum* Metaphysicae esse, *omne intelligibile*, quatenus ab homine naturali rationis lumine sine ullo materiae conceptu est intelligibile".

[14] *Ibid.*, c. 2, problema 1 (pp. 22–23): "An nihil sit intelligibile?"

genus and is the *primum intelligibile*. "Being" can be defined in terms of the genera that are "above" (*supra*) being, like *intelligibile, aliquid* and *positivum*.[15] Unlike Suárez, who denied any conceptual community between real being and being of reason, Timpler affirms such a community in the sense that real being and being of reason share an "analogous genus" of being.[16]

3. Timpler's conception of metaphysics has been interpreted by J.-F. Courtine as typical of the evolution of this discipline in modern times.[17] The changed understanding of intelligibility leads to a turn in the "subject/object" of modern metaphysics to the effect that the scope of "the general science" is broadened to what Leibniz calls "the science of what is thinkable" (*scientia de cogitabili*) or "the science of something and nothing" (*scientia de aliquo et nihilo*).[18] Immanuel Kant's project of transcendental philosophy stands at the end of this development. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he concludes the section "Transcendental Analytics" with a remark on the beginning of a transcendental philosophy, which he regards as necessary for the "completion of the system". The highest concept with which it is customary to begin a transcendental philosophy is the division into "the possible" and "the impossible". But Kant objects that, since all division presupposes a concept to be divided, a still higher concept is required. This all-embracing notion is the concept of "an object in general" (*Gegenstand überhaupt*), "taken problematically, without its having been decided whether it is something or nothing".[19] He then presents different concepts of "nothing" in order to determine in what sense the object is something or nothing. The term *supertranscendentalis* did not find

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[15] *Ibid.*, c. 3, problema 1 (p. 28): "An ens possit definiri, et quomodo?"

[16] *Ibid.*, problema 4 (p. 31): "Alterum theorema est, Ens universaliter acceptum non esse genus univocum entis realis et rationis, sed genus analogum".

[17] Cf. J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, pp. 419–430.

[18] W. Hübener, "Scientia de aliquo et nihilo. Die historischen Voraussetzungen von Leibniz' Ontologiebegriff", in: A. Schwann (ed.), *Denken im Schatten des Nihilismus. Festschrift für Wilhelm Weischedel zum 70. Geburtstag*, Darmstadt 1975, pp. 34–54. This study was the first to indicate the importance of the notion of "supertranscendental".

[19] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 291/B 347: "Der höchste Begriff, von dem man eine Transzendentalphilosophie anzufangen pflegt, ist gemeiniglich die Einteilung in das Mögliche und Unmögliche. Da aber alle Einteilung einen eingeteilten Begriff voraussetzt, so muß noch ein höherer angegeben werden, und dieser ist der Begriff von einem Gegenstande überhaupt (problematisch genommen, und unausgemacht, ob es etwas oder nichts sei)".

acceptance in the eighteenth century, but Kant's "object in general" seems to be the appropriate expression for what seventeenth century thinkers called "supertranscendental being" as a designation for intelligibility or objectivity as such.

In Courtine's view, early modern metaphysics developed into a supertranscendental science or a "science of something", for which he introduced the term "tino-logy".[20] His claim raises, as any pretentious speculative hypothesis, several questions. First, his interpretation of Suárez is not without hermeneutic violence. He ascribes to the Spanish philosopher a "supertranscendental" understanding of this discipline, which the author himself explicitly refuses. But what Suárez does not say, he should actually say because of his new concept of "reality", based on the identification of *ens* and *res*. Yet Courtine's interpretation of this identification is also questionable, since we have seen the incorrectness of the suggestion that Suárez understands "reality" without any reference to actual existence. Second, Timpler's thought is presented as representative of early modern metaphysics, but his supertranscendental conception of this science remained in fact an isolated case. Third, one could wonder whether the doctrine of the supertranscendentals is the link between the medieval transcendental and the Kantian transcendental or whether there are other more decisive motives and reasons for the emergence of Kant's transcendental philosophy.[21] It is a question that needs further reflection and a more thorough treatment. In section 16.4, we discuss another intesting link, Vico's thesis "the true and what is made are convertible"; it expresses distance from the transcendental-ontological tradition, insofar as the thesis presupposes a model of truth, in which the constructive role of the human intellect is the criterion.

Only one aspect of the complex process of transformation will engage us now, namely, the suggestion that the beginnings of a super-

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[20] For the notion of "tinology", cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Tino-logia: An alternative for ontology?", in: L. Atucha / D. Calma / C. König-Pralong / I. Zavattero (eds.), *Mots médiévaux offerts à Ruedi Imbach*, Turnhout 2011 (Textes et Etudes du Moyen Age, 54), pp. 729–737.

[21] Cf. D. Demange, "Métaphysique et théorie de la représentation. La question des origines du transcendantalisme revisitée", in: *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 107 (2009), pp. 1–39. I. Mandrella, "Die frühneuzeitliche Weiterbildung der aristotelischen Metaphysik im Scotismus: Supertranszendental oder Realwissenschaft?", in R. Darge / E. J. Bauer / G. Frank (eds.), *Der Aristotelismus an den europäischen Universitäten der frühen Neuzeit*, Stuttgart 2010, pp. 35–56.

transcendental ontology are already found in medieval accounts of the transcendentals. Our main interest is the question of whether there are tendencies in the Middle Ages towards an alternative model of First Philosophy that seeks a more encompassing notion than that of transcendental "being".

15.3 Supertranscendental tendencies in medieval philosophy

The recent emphasis on the importance of the doctrine of the supertranscendentals for the modern conception of metaphysics has also put medieval philosophy in a new perspective. From the viewpoint of the genealogy of Western metaphysics the pertinent question is not whether there are medieval anticipations of Kant's transcendental-logical approach (is there a Copernican Revolution in the Middle Ages?), but rather whether the medieval doctrines of the transcendentals contain preparations for or prefigurations of the transformation of metaphysics into a "tino-logy" or a supertranscendental science.

Thomist tradition?

The notion of a "supertranscendental" that was developed in sixteenth-century logical treatises presupposes Thomas's concept of transcendentality. They explain that what is surpassed by a supertranscendental term are the six transcendental notions *res, unum, bonum, aliquid*, *verum*, and the number of six always betrays the impact of Aquinas's account in *De veritate*.

A connection with the Thomist tradition was strongly suggested by Joseph Gredt, who incorporated the "supertranscendental" concept of "being" (*ens supertranscendentale*) into his widely used Neothomistic handbook of philosophy, *Elementa philosophiae aristotelico-thomisticae*. Being is transcendental, insofar as it is said of every real being, created and uncreated; it is supertranscendental, insofar as it is said of real being and being of reason.[22] Under the influence of this manual,

[22] Joseph Gredt, *Elementa philosophiae aristotelico-thomisticae*, Vol. II, Freiburg [11]1956, p. 7: "Ens est conceptus transcendentalis, immo supertranscendentalis. Ens est transcendentale, quatenus dicitur de omni ente reali: de ente reali creato seu praedicamentali et de ente increato seu de Deo; ens est supertranscendentale, quatenus dicitur de ente reali et rationis".

Thomas Aquinas's idea of being has been interpreted as "supertranscendental", insofar as it "transcends created and uncreated being, real and ideal being"; the determination of being can only occur by a negative principle: "Being is not nothing".[23] But this connection between the idea of a supertranscendental and Thomism is more a historical curiosity than a historical datum. Aquinas does not know a concept of being, common to real being and being of reason; the Thomist tradition does not reveal any tendency to the idea of a supertranscendental. The locus of such a tendency is rather the concept of *res* in Henry of Ghent and the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Scotism.[24]

The concept of res *in Henry of Ghent*

Courtine ascribes a preparatory part in the transformation of metaphysics into a science of what is thinkable or tino-logy to Henry of Ghent.[25] Two considerations are important for that attribution. The first is Henry's account of *res*: the most common concept is "thing" (*res*) or "something" (*aliquid*), since it is only opposed to pure "nothing". This concept embraces two modes of *res*: "a thing according to opinion only", derived from *reor, reris*, and "a true thing", derived from *res, ratitudo*; it thus embraces real being as well as being of reason and has the feature of a supertranscendental term. Another impulse is the "idealist" interpretation of Henry's "new" metaphysics by Jean Paulus. In his reading, Henry offers an alternative for the science of being, since the concept of "thing" in the most general sense is "the point of departure" of his metaphysics.

But as we have shown (see ch. 7.2.3), Henry does not conceive *res* in its widest (cognitive) meaning as the proper object of the human intellect or the first object of metaphysics. This object is "real being", which he understands in a quidditative sense and identifies with *res*, *ratitudo*. Henry advances a new argument for the ontological conception of First Philosophy, based on the identity of the *subiectum* of

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[23] B. Lakebrink, *Hegels dialektische Ontologie und die thomistische Analektik*, Köln 1955, p. 213.

[24] Cf. L. Oeing-Hanhoff, "*Res* comme concept transcendental et sur-transcendental", in: M. Fattori / M. Bianchi (eds.), *Res. Atti del III° Colloquio internazionale del Lessico intellettuale europeo*, Rome 1982 (Lessico intellettuale europeo, 26), pp. 285–296.

[25] J.-F. Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique*, pp. 183–184. Cf. J.-F. Courtine, "Res", in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. VIII, Basel 1992, pp. 892–901 (on Henry: pp. 896–898).

metaphysics with the proper *obiectum* of the intellect. Metaphysics is First Philosophy, because it deals with what is first conceived by the intellect, "being as being". The concept of "thing" may have the feature of a supertranscendental term, but it does not have a basic function in metaphysics. This discipline is the science of being-as-being with its transcendental properties.

Duns Scotus: A "super-transcendental" understanding of being in the third Quodlibet?

In his third *Quodlibet*, Duns Scotus presents his most extensive explanation of the concept of "thing" (*res*) or "being" (*ens*)—terms he uses as synonyms here.[26] The text had a strong *Wirkungsgeschichte*, because it was reproduced *verbatim* by the influential *Lexicon philosophicum*, composed by Rudolf Goclenius in the seventeenth century (Frankfurt 1613). In modern scholarship, Scotus's *Quodlibet* has received special attention, because it has been read as typical of an ambivalence in his concept of "being", which paves the way to a conception of metaphysics as a "super-transcendental" science. Scotus's First Philosophy, it has been suggested, is "tinology", the science of *res*, which includes real being as well as what is merely thinkable.[27]

1. In the third *Quodlibet*, Scotus states that the term *res*, taken in its most common sense (*communissime*), "extends to anything that is not nothing (*nihil*)". The statement implicitly recognizes that the concept of "thing" can only indirectly be elucidated through its opposite, since it cannot be explained through something prior and better known; the opposition to *nihil* serves as a guiding principle for Scotus's account. He distinguishes two meanings of "nothing": In its truest sense, it is

[26] On this text, cf. A. B. Wolter, "An Oxford Dialogue on Language and Metaphysics", in: *The Review of Metaphysics* 31 (1978), pp. 615–648, in particular p. 633–638. H. Möhle, "Metaphysik und Erkenntniskritik, Prima scientia est scibilis primi", in: L. Honnefelder / A. Speer / Th. Kobusch / S. Bullido del Barrio (eds.), *Johannes Duns Scotus, 1308–2008. Die philosophischen Perspektiven seines Werkes. Investigations into his Philosophy*, Münster – St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 2010 (Archa Verbi. Subsidia, 5), pp. 69–86.

[27] Cf. Th. Kobusch, "Das Seiende als transzendentaler oder supertranszendentaler Begriff. Deutungen der Univozität des Begriffs bei Scotus und den Scotisten", in: L. Honnefelder / R. Wood / M. Dreyer (eds.), *John Duns Scotus. Metaphysics and Ethics*, Leiden – New York – Köln 1996 (Studien und Texte zur Geitesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 53), pp. 345–366. O. Boulnois, *Être et représentation. Une généalogie de la métaphysique moderne à l'époque de Duns Scot, XIII^{e}–XIV^{e} siècle*, Paris 1999, pp. 446–452.

that which includes a contradiction, because this excludes any form of existence (*esse*), both outside the mind and inside the mind, for two contradictories cannot constitute one intelligible thing (*unum intelligibile*). In another sense, "nothing" is what neither is, nor can be, some being outside the intellect. In accordance with this twofold sense of "nothing", "thing" or "being" taken *communissime* can have two meanings.[28]

In the first sense, *res* extends to anything that does not include a contradiction, whether it be an *ens rationis*, which only has being in the mind, or an *ens reale*, having some sort of entity independent of the consideration of the intellect. *Res* in this most general sense, signifying anything conceivable (*quodlibet conceptibile*), can be posited as "the first object" (*primum obiectum*) of the intellect, for nothing can be intelligible if it does not include this kind of being. Scotus leaves open the question as to whether "being" or "thing" in this sense represents "a commonness of analogy or univocity".[29] Any science, both the one called "real" and the one called "rational", can be said to deal with thing or being in this sense.

In the second (and less common) sense of "thing" or "being", it is restricted to what does or can have entity outside the mind; it is the *ens reale*. This division of "thing" echoes that of Henry of Ghent, since Scotus defines "real being" as that which does or *can* have actual existence. He refers to the Arab background of these notions by indicating that Avicenna seems to have this sense in mind, when he says that *res* and *ens* are common to all genera.[30] But apparently Scotus was not

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[28] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, q. 3 (ed. L. Vivès, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXV, Paris 1895, p. 114): "Communissime, prout [hoc nomen 'res'] se extendit ad quodcumque, quod non est nihil; et hoc potest intelligi dupliciter: Verissime enim illud est nihil quod includit contradictionem, et solum illud, quia illud excludit omne esse extra intellectum, et in intellectu (…). Alio modo dicitur 'nihil', quod nec est, nec esse potest aliquod ens extra animam".

[29] *Ibid.*: "Ens ergo vel res isto primo modo, accipitur omnino communissime, et extendit se ad quodcumque, quod non includit contradictionem, sive sit ens rationis, hoc est praecise habens 'esse' in intellectu considerante, sive sit ens reale, habens aliquam entitatem extra considerationem intellectus. (…) et isto intellectu communissimo, prout 'res' vel 'ens' dicitur quodlibet conceptibile, quod non includit contradictionem, sive illa communitas sit Analogiae, sive univocationis, de qua non curo modo, posset poni ens primum objectum intellectus".

[30] *Ibid.*: "Et secundo accipitur in isto membro, minus communiter pro ente, quod habet vel habere potest aliquam entitatem non ex consideratione intellectus (…). Et isto modo videtur loqui Avicenna 1 *Metaph.* c. 5 quod ea quae sunt communia omnibus generibus, sunt 'res' et 'ens'".

quite sure about his interpretation, for a few lines later he remarks that the Arab philosopher might also have taken the two terms in the first (most general) sense.[31]

2. Scotus's metaphysical position in the third *Quodlibet* is hard to determine, since it is not definitive in two respects. First, it is striking that he does not introduce his main innovation, the thesis of the univocity of being, and does not decide whether the most comprehensive concept of "being" that embraces real being and being of reason is common by univocity or by analogy. In one place in his work, however, Scotus explicitly denies the extension of univocity to real being and being of reason. A univocal concept can be abstracted from God and creature, not, however, from *res realis* and *res rationis*.[32] If a univocal concept of "being" with such a scope is impossible, the claim of the "supertranscendental" character of this notion is untenable.

It also remains unclear how the first *obiectum* of the intellect is related to the proper *subiectum* of metaphysics. Scotus claims in the *Quodlibet* that the first object of the intellect is being in the widest sense of what is "conceivable" that transcends the distinction of real being and being of reason and thus can be designated with the later term "super-transcendental". If one wants to retain the universal character of First Philosophy, one would have to acknowledge that its subject is identical with the object of the intellect and that, consequently, metaphysics is a "super-transcendental" science. The supertranscendental understanding of being makes itself felt in Martin Heidegger's interpretation of Scotus. In his *Habilitationsschrift*, he interprets Scotus's concept of *ens* as "something as such" (*Etwas überhaupt*) or "objectivity as such" (*Gegenständlichkeit überhaupt*), which makes the knowledge of an object possible.[33]

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[31] *Ibid.* (pp. 114–115): "Habemus ergo primum membrum sic, scilicet communissime, bipartitum in illud, scilicet quod non includit contradictionem, qualecumque 'esse' habeat, et in illud quod habet, vel habere potest proprium 'esse' extra intellectum et isto modo, vel utroque modo, vel saltem secundo modo, accipit Avicenna 'rem' et 'ens', ut dictum est".

[32] Duns Scotus, *Reportata Parisiensia*, IA, d. 29, q. un. (ed. L. Vivès, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXII, Paris 1893, p. 369): "(…) licet posset abstrahi unus conceptus univocus a Deo et creatura, non tamen a re rationis et a re reali, quia conceptus abstractus a Deo et creatura esset ex utraque parte realis (…)".

[33] M. Heidegger, *Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*, Tübingen 1916; now in *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. I/1, Frankfurt am Main 1978, pp. 189–411, in particular pp. 214–217. Heidegger's study partly deals with the writing *Grammatica*

If, however, one wants to maintain that metaphysics is a "real" and "transcendental" science, its subject can only be *res* in the sense of *ens reale*. There can be no doubt that the less common concept of "being" in the third *Quodlibet* is decisive for Scotus's view of metaphysics and that he understands this discipline as a *scientia transcendens* and a *scientia realis*.[34] In contrast to the brief remark on the "first object" of the intellect in the *Quodlibet*, Scotus's thorough analysis of the first adequate *obiectum* of the intellect in the *Ordinatio* (see ch. 9.4.3) shows that this object must be being as being. There proves to be an intrinsic connection between the "subject" of metaphysics and the "object" of the intellect, insofar as both are transcendental.

The strongest evidence that Scotus's *scientia transcendens* is a *scientia realis* is the fact that, as we have seen (ch. 9.5.1), he introduces a new model for the relation between being and the transcendental properties convertible with it in order to safeguard the real character of this science. If these transcendentals, Scotus argues, were only conceptually distinguished from being, and not by a real formality, then metaphysics that considers these properties would no longer be "a real science".[35]

Nicholas Bonet: A new kind of univocity

Supertranscendental tendencies can be sensed in fourteenth-century Scotists. An interesting example is Nicholas Bonet (d. 1343), who was, as we have seen (ch. 10.4), the author of the first systematic treatise of metaphysics in the Middle Ages. His "transcendental" metaphysics differs from Scotus's model in several respects: he dissociates the subject of metaphysics from the first object of the intellect and extends the univocity of the subject of this science to real being and being of reason. Being as being is "a quidditative determination univocal to real

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speculativa that is contained in the Vivès edition of Scotus's *Opera omnia* but was later identified as a work by Thomas of Erfurt. The first part of Heidegger's study, however, that is concerned with "the doctrine of the categories", was largely based on authentic texts.

[34] Cf. R. Darge, "Erste Philosophie als Transzendentalwissenschaft gemäß Duns Scotus: Seinswissenschaft oder 'Onto-Logik'?", in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 111 (2004), pp. 43–61.

[35] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d. 16, q. un., n. 17 (ed. L. Vivès, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XIII, Paris 1893, p. 43a–b): "Aliter Metaphysica concludens tales passiones de ente, et illas considerans, non esset scientia realis".

being and being of reason".[36] This extension of the univocity thesis has been interpreted by Theo Kobusch as an innovation of structural importance, insofar as Bonet was "probably the first to hold the doctrine of the supertranscendental character of the concept of being".[37] From the perspective of univocity Bonet's science of being transcends the model of a "transcendental science" and appears as a fourteenth-century anticipation of a "supertranscendental science".

This interpretation, however, has not been passed unchallenged. One could object that there is an opposite tendency in Bonet's metaphysics, a restrictive understanding of being-as-being, which forms a difficulty for a "supertranscendenral" interpretation.[38] He clearly distinguishes between the metaphysical concept of "being" (as being), signifying one determinate *ratio* that "prescinds" from all other quiddities, and "being" in the sense of "all that is positive". The former concept of "being", although it extends to *ens rationis*, is restrictive in comparison to the meaning of "being" in the sense of *omne positivum*, which has the feature of a supertranscendental concept, and is thus contrary to the idea of an all-encompassing notion.

But something can be said against this negative conclusion. The identification of "being" that signifies "all that is positive" with a supertranscendental concept is questionable: "being" in this sense is not one single concept but an equivocal term. Equivocity is not only incompatible with the subject of any science but also with the pretension of the doctrine of the supertranscendentals. The conclusion also underestimates the structural importance of Bonet's extension of univocity to real being and being of reason for the idea of supertranscendentality. It is remarkable that he appeals to the same arguments that were used for a supertranscendental notion of "being" centuries later, namely, the conceptual community of *ens rationis* and *ens reale*, and the inclusion of being of reason in the universal consideration of metaphysics.

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[36] Nicholas Bonet, *Metaphysica*, I, c. 6 (ed. Venice 1505, fol. 8vb): "Ens autem inquantum ens est quiditas univoca enti reali et enti rationis (…)".

[37] Th. Kobusch, "Das Seiende als transzendentaler oder supertranszendentaler Begriff. Deutungen der Univozität des Begriffs bei Scotus und den Scotisten", in: L. Honnefelder / R. Wood / M. Dreyer (eds.), *John Duns Scotus. Metaphysics and Ethics*, pp. 345–366, in particular p. 361.

[38] Cf. I. Mandrella, "Metaphysik als Supertranszendentalwissenschaft? Zum scotischen Metaphysikentwurf des Nicolaus Bonetus", in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 75 (2008), pp. 161–193.

Francis of Marchia: Transcendental as an intentio neutra

A real impetus to the idea of a supertranscendental is to be found in the thought of Francis of Marchia (d. 1344) (see ch. 10.5).[39] It does not consist in the introduction of a group of new notions that surpass the transcendentals but in a modification as regards the status of transcendental concepts. Marchia's interpretation is an attempt to surpass the distinction between concepts of the first and of the second intention. He understands transcendental terms as *intentiones neutrae*; "neutral intentions" are common to concepts of the first intention, that is, real beings, and concepts of the second intention, that is, beings of reason. In this way the transcendentals acquire a status or function that was attributed to the *supertranscendentia* in the sixteenth century.

Moreover, Marchia proposes a new conceptual order of the transcendentals. It is not "being" that is the first concept, but "thing" (*res*) and "something" (*aliquid*). The formally or "abstractively" first concept is *aliquid*, which is common to the transcendentals and consequently "superior" to them; it is the first *obiectum* of the intellect. The materially or "substractively" first concept is *res*, which is the "foundation" of all other concepts. It is the *subiectum* of metaphysics, but because Marchia maintains that this subject must be "real", he underlines that "thing in general" should not be taken in the sense of an *intentio neutra*, but as common solely to things of the first intention. In his thought there is no isomorphy between the subject of metaphysics and the object of the intellect either.

Walter Burley: Degrees of transcendentality

A supertranscendental tendency of a different nature is manifest in the small treatise *De ente* of Walter Burley, who studied in Oxford, where he heard Duns Scotus, and at Paris (ca. 1309–1323). His account of "being" is confirmed by observations in the treatise *De puritate artis logicae*, of which the second version, dating from 1325–8, is a response to Ockham's *Summa logicae*, published in 1324.[40]

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[39] Cf. S. Folger-Fonfara, *Das 'Super'-Transzendentale und die Spaltung der Metaphysik. Der Entwurf des Franziscus von Marchia*, Leiden-Boston 2008 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 96).

[40] Walter Burleigh, *De ente* (ed. H. Shapiro, in: *Manuscripta* 7 (1963), pp. 103–108). Cf. *De puritate artis logicae tractatus longior*, tract. I, pars 3 (ed. P. Boehner, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1955 (Franciscan Institute Publications. Text Series, 9), pp. 54–59).

After the division of being *per se* into the ten predicaments Burley gives a definition of *transcendens*: it is what is common to several predicaments—not necesarily, as it appears, to all of them. For instance, every *absolutum* is transcendental, because it is common to three categories: substance, quality and quantity; and every *respectivum* is transcendental, because it is common to the seven other categories. That which is common to all categories is more "transcendental" than that which is common to some of them. There is thus an order of "more" and "less", a gradation, in transcendentality. This idea in itself is not unusual in Scotist thought—we encountered it in Francis of Meyronnes and Peter Thomae—, but the way Burley elaborates on the order is special. "Being" that is common to the categories is transcendental, but "being" that is common to every intelligible is "maximally transcendental" (*maxime transcendens*).[41] What is remarkable is that Burley applies the gradation of transcendentality to the different senses of "being".

He distinguishes three senses. Taken as "maximally transcendental", "being" is identical with the adequate object of the intellect, for every being is knowable by the intellect and all that is knowable by the intellect is being—the expressions are convertible. "Being" in this sense is called "intelligible being" or "being in the intellect objectively" (*ens in intellectu obiective*). In the second way, "being" is taken as that for which it is not "prohibited" (*prohibitum*) to be; in this sense it is every possible being. In the third way, it is taken as an actually existing being; *ens* and *existens* are then convertible.[42]

Engl. transl. by P. V. Spade, *Walter Burley, On the Purity of the Art of Logic*, New Haven – London 2000.

[41] Walter Burleigh, *De ente* (ed. Shapiro, p. 106): "Item intelligendum quod illud dicitur transcendens quod est commune diversis predicamentis. Verbi gracia: omne absolutum est transcendens quia est commune tribus predicamentis—ut substancie, qualitati et quantitati. Similiter omne respectivum est transcendens septem predicamentis; et illud quod est commune omnibus predicamentis est transcendens, et est magis transcendens quam illud quod est commune aliquibus predicamentis et non aliis. Et ideo transcendens recipit comparacionem quia aliquid est magis transcendens, et aliquid minus, et aliquid maxime. Verbi gracia: absolutum est ens transcendens; et ens quod est commune per se decem predicamentis; et ens quod est commune omni intelligibili est maxime transcendens".

[42] *Ibid.* (pp. 107–108): "Et isto modo ens quod est maxime transcendens est obiectum adequatum intellectus secundum Avicennam, nam omne ens est cognoscibile ab intellectu, et omne cognoscibile ab intellectu est ens; et isto modo isti termini 'ens' et 'intelligibile' sunt termini convertibiles (…). Alio modo ut est commune ad omne illud cui non est esse prohibitum (…). Accipiendo vero ens prout est participium, sic

Burley's classification of the senses of "being" is significant for more than one reason. His phrase "maximally transcendental" indicates a descending order in transcendentality: objective being—possible being—actual being. The use of the term "prohibited", which in the fourteenth century was applied to "impossible beings", suggests that these beings, although excluded from the second way of "being", are included in the first sense of "objective" being in the intellect. "Maximally transcendental" being tends towards a supertranscendental.

John Baconthorpe: Scope of intelligibility

The most significant expression of the supertranscendental tendency in fourteenth-century philosophy is probably a discussion in the *Sentences* commentary of the English Carmelite John Baconthorpe (d. 1345/8). He read the *Sentences* at Paris before 1318 and was regent master in the Faculty of Theology by 1323. In his commentary, Baconthorpe presents an overview of the medieval debate on "the first adequate object of our intellect". He lists four opinions, arranged according to an increasing degree of commonness.[43]

The first opinion holds that "the quiddity of a material thing" (*quidditas rei materialis*) is the first adequate object—it is the position generally ascribed to Aquinas; the second opinion teaches that "the true" (*verum*) as transcendental is this object—a view discussed by Scotus in his *Ordinatio*. Baconthorpe rejects both opinions and then presents a third position that regards "transcendental being" (*ens transcendens*) as the first adequate object of the intellect. This is the opinion of

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solum dicitur de existentibus in effectu, ita quod 'ens' et 'existens' convertuntur". Cf. *De puritate artis logicae tractatus longior*, tract. I, pars 3 (ed. Boehner, p. 59): "Ens potest accipi tripliciter. Uno modo ut est maxime transcendens et communi omni intelligibili. Et sic est adaequatum obiectum intellectus. (…) Secundo modo accipitur pro ente, cui non est esse prohibitum, et sic omne possibile esse est ens. (…) Tertio modo accipitur pro ente actualiter existente, et sic est participium descendens ab hoc verbo 'est'. (…) Ens primo modo dictum dicitur ens in intellectu, quia est obiectum intellectus; et ita est ens in intellectu obiective. Ens secundo modo dictum dicitur esse ens in suis causis vel ens quod est in sua causa. Sed ens tertio modo dictum dicitur esse ens in se".

[43] John Baconthorpe, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Cremona 1618, pp. 83–87). The Cremona edition speaks of "five" opinions, but they are in fact four in number. Cf. W. Goris, "After Scotus. Dispersions of Metaphysics, of the Scope of Intelligibility, and of the Transcendental in the Early 14th Century", in: *Quaestio* 8 (2008), pp. 139–157.

Scotus, Baconthorpe observes, but he criticizes Scotus's argument for this primacy. The Subtle Doctor maintains that being is the first object, not because it has an absolute essential commonness, for being is not predicated quidditatively of its properties and of the ultimate differences, but because it has a double primacy, an essential commonness and a virtual one. According to Baconthorpe, being is the first object, insofar as it abstracts from both kinds of commonness, since in this way it is completely "uncontracted" and the more common notion.[44]

It is striking that *ens transcendens*, the key term of the third position, which Baconthorpe finally identifies himself with, is described as being "common to real being and being of reason". Without any hesitation, he interprets the Scotist "transcendental being" in a supertranscendental sense! What is still more striking is Baconthorpe's introduction of a fourth position, which holds that there is something even more common than transcendental being and that consequently this must be the first adequate object of the intellect.[45] What could this object that transcends transcendental being be?

That which is more common than transcendental being and prior to it is "being or non-being" (*ens vel non ens*). In what sense does this disjunction have a greater commonness? The first argument Baconthorpe presents appeals to one of the senses of "priority" that Aristotle had distinguished in the *Categories*. According to this sense, "prior" is "what does not reciprocate as to implication of being".[46] Aristotle gives as example the relation of "one" to "two": "One" is prior to "two", since, if there are two, it follows that there is one, but the converse does not hold. In the same sense "being or non-being" is prior to "transcendental being" and more common than it, for if we say "being

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[44] John Baconthorpe, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Cremona 1618, p. 84b): "Ideo aliter arguo contra Scotum. Concesso enim ei quod ens non praedicetur quiditative de differentiis et passionibus, adhuc male dicit quod est obiectum ut concernens communitatem essentialem et virtualem, immo hoc erit ut praescindit ab utroque ratione entis. Sed (…) ens abstractum praescindens a communitate seu primitate virtuali et essentiali est magis commune, quia sic est penitus incontractum".

[45] *Ibid.* (p. 85a): "Et quia dictum est quod ens debet esse obiectum sub communissima ratione, ideo est 5 [*corr.*: quarta] opinio quae ponit quod primum obiectum adaequatum est aliquid communius et prius obicibile intellectui ente transcendente. Quia ea ratione ponitur ens transcendens primum obiectum adaequatum quia ens est commune ad ens <secundum rem et ens> secundum rationem et ad universale et singulare et ad quicquid quod possit inveniri vel cogitari. Igitur si sit aliquid communius ente illud erit primum obiectum adaequatum. Sed hoc contingit invenire".

[46] Aristotle, *Categories*, c. 12, 14a 29–30.

or non-being", this does not imply that "being" is.[47] One may have doubts about the strength of the argument. It seems that a disjunction presupposes the concepts of which it consists and that these concepts are thus prior to the disjunction.

Another argument for the priority of "being or non-being" is related to the first principle of metaphysics and intends to show that this principle requires a more common object than "being". The first principles of the first science concern the first object. Now the first principle of metaphysics is the proposition "it is impossible for the same to be and not to be". "To be *and* not to be" cannot be said of the same thing in the same respect, but only one of them, to be *or* not to be, applies. Therefore, "being or non-being" is the first object of the intellect.[48]

Baconthorpe's presentation of the fourth position displays a notable similarity with Timpler's conception of metaphysics in the seventeenth century. According to Timpler, the adequate subject of metaphysics is something more common than "being", for this science also considers non-being. He concludes that this more common subject is "every intelligible" that includes "nothing", as our understanding of the basic principles of metaphysics proves.

Baconthorpe has to define his own position, namely that "being" is the first adequate object of the intellect, by taking into account the arguments for the fourth opinion that the disjunction "being or non-being" is rather this object. His argumentative strategy consists in distinguishing several modes (*modi*) of the phrase "first object" of the intellect. We restrict our analysis to those aspects of Baconthorpe's discussion that are immediately relevant to our inquiry into supertranscendental tendencies.

The "first object" of a potency can be *per se* and primary, *per se* and secondary, *per accidens*, and aggregating (*aggregans*) everything intelligible in any mode whatsoever. Baconthorpe applies this fourfold distinction to "being" as the first adequate object of the intellect. In the

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[47] John Baconthorpe, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. Cremona 1618, p. 85a): "Minor patet quia illud est communius et prius a quo non convertitur consequentia. Sed si dicas 'ens vel non ens' non convertitur 'ergo est ens' quia a disiunctiva ad alteram partem est fallacia consequentis. Igitur 'ens vel non ens' est communius et prius ente transcendente".

[48] *Ibid.*: "Item. Prima principia primae scientiae sunt de primo obiecto. Sed haec propositio secundum Philosophum 4 Metaph. 'impossibile est idem esse et non esse' est primum principium in Metaphysica. Igitur 'ens vel non ens' est primum obiectum intelligibile".

first manner, "being" as utterly prescinding and abstract (*praescindens et abstractum*) is the first adequate object; in the second manner, it is "being" insofar as it concerns *entia realia*; in the third manner, there is no corresponding first adequate object, because beings *per accidens* do not have any order; in the fourth manner, the first adequate object is "being" that aggregates all that is intelligible, either it is *per se* or *per accidens*.[49]

Baconthorpe relates metaphysics to "being" in the second and the fourth sense of "first adequate object"—he is silent about the first mode (*ens praescindens*). This general science deals with being that concerns *entia realia*, for only these are *per se* intelligible.[50] But although this discipline deals principally with real being, it also considers negations, insofar as these contribute to our understanding of real beings. Thus, the subject of metaphysics somehow extends (*extendit*) to beings of reason, which proves that "being that aggregates *entia per se* and *entia per accidens*" can be the first object of the intellect.[51]

The most innovative aspect of Baconthorpe's account is another distinction concerning the first object of the intellect he introduces in order to render the claim understandable that the disjunction "being or non-being" is the first and most common object. The intellect, he states, has a twofold act: "simple" understanding and "complex" understanding. These terms refer to Aristotle's view (*De anima* III, c. 6) that the intellect has two operations. The first is the operation by which the intellect understands "what something is", the other the operation by which it composes and divides concepts, that is, by which it forms propositions. Baconthorpe maintains that both acts have their own first objects. "Being" is the first and most common object of the intellect in its act of simple understanding, but "being or non-being" is the first object of complex understanding.[52]

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[49] *Ibid.* (pp. 85b–86a).

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] *Ibid.* (p. 86b): "Quod etiam ens aggregans entia per se et per accidens (…) aliquo modo possit concedi primum obiectum adaequatum intellectus probo (…). Et hoc patet manifeste quia licet metaphysica primo et principaliter sit de ente reali (…), tamen de negationibus et fictitiis est eius consideratio aliqualis, videlicet ut habent combinationem vel comparationem ad entia realia. (…) Sed hoc non esset nisi ens quod est subiectum in metaphysica et habitus metaphysicus extenderet se quoquo modo ad fictitia, negationes et ad entia per accidens".

[52] *Ibid.*: "Pro solutione aliorum argumentorum est notandum quod cum intellectus habeat duplicem actum, et simplicem et complexum, oportet quod habeat duplex obiectum correspondens. Dico ergo quod ens est primum obiectum intellectus simplex

The novelty of Baconthorpe's interpretation is obvious, if we recall Aquinas's foundation of theoretical knowledge (see ch. 6.3.1). Aquinas also recognizes that there is a first in both operations of the intellect. In simple understanding the first conception of the intellect is "being"; what is first in the second operation of the intellect is the principle "it is impossible for a thing to be and not to be at the same time". But this principle is founded on the first conception of the intellect, "being". In contrast to Aquinas who sees a relation of foundation between what is first in the two operations of the intellect, Baconthorpe attributes an "objective" autonomy to the two acts.

Conclusion

The general conclusion to be drawn from our inquiry is that there exist supertranscendental tendencies in medieval philosophy, which manifest themselves particularly in the discussion on the first and adequate *obiectum* of the intellect. Several fourteenth-century thinkers take this object wider than *ens reale*: it is *res* or *ens* in its most common sense of *conceptibile* (Duns Scotus in his third *Quodlibet*), or *aliquid* that surpasses the other transcendentals (Francis of Marchia), or *ens maxime transcendens* that is "being in the intellect *obiective*" (Walter Burley), or *ens transcendens*, common to real being and being of reason (John Baconthorpe). At the same time most of these thinkers do not see metaphysics as a "supertranscendental science", because they want to hold to the character of this discipline as *scientia realis*. Consequently, they abandon the identification of the *subiectum* of metaphysics with the object of the intellect. Even Nicholas Bonet maintains this dissociation, although he is more radical than others, insofar as he teaches a new kind of univocity of being that is common to real being and being of reason, and takes the subject of metaphysics, being-as-being, in this univocal sense.

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intelligentiae (…). Et 'ens vel non ens' est primum obiectum vel pars obiecti primi intelligentiae complexae"; (p. 87a): "Ad quartum quando dicitur quod ens vel non ens est universalissimum, dico quod ens vel non ens est universalissimum respectu intellectus complexi, ens tamen est universalissimum respectu intellectus incomplexi".

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

CONCLUSION: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL WAY OF THOUGHT FOR MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

16.1 Transcendentality

We have followed the development of the doctrine of the transcendentals from its beginning in Philip the Chancellor to its conclusion in the *Disputationes metaphysicae* of Francisco Suárez. The history of more than three centuries has shown a variety of conceptions, but also reveals some common features. Scholastic transcendental philosophy intends a threefold 'transcensus': ontological, logical and epistemological. The 'transcensus' is primarily ontological in nature, insofar as it is directed to the *transcendentia*, which are so called, because these terms transcend the categories of being. But the 'transcensus' also possesses a logical-semantical aspect, insofar as it is directed to the *communissima*, and an epistemological aspect, insofar as it is directed to the *prima*, the first conceptions of the intellect. Between these three aspects there exists an inner connection: transcendentals are the "firsts", since they are most common; and because of their commonness they transcend the categories.

16.1.1 *Logical* transcensus

Towards the communia

The logical aspect of the 'transcensus' is probably the historical origin of the term *transcendens* in the new meaning of "transcendental". Logical treatises of the twelfth century show an awareness of the special semantic nature of some transgeneric terms, explicitly identified as *nomina transcendentia*, in discussions on the equivocity of names and on "indefinite names" (*nomina infinita*). Terms that "contain all things", such as *res* and *aliquid*, cannot be made indefinite (see ch. 2.1).

What is transcended in the 'transcensus' is the order of the five *praedicabilia* or universals, which Porphyry, in his *Isagoge* to Aristotle's

work *The Categories*, had elaborated upon based on the possible relations between predicate and subject. Duns Scotus had explained Porphyry's account as follows: Something is either predicated *in quid* of a subject in reply to the question of "what it is" (the *genus* and *species*) or is predicated *in quale* in reply to the question of "how it is". In that case either an essential qualification is predicated (the *differentia*) or a non-essential one. If this note is convertible with the subject, it is the *proprium*; if the note is incidental to the subject, it is the logical *accidens*. The 'transcensus' intends a semantic transcendence (see ch. 1.4); it goes even beyond the most general predicables, the *genera generalissima*.

That to which the 'transcensus' is directed are the *communia* or *communissima* (Philip the Chancellor), terms that transcend the predicables because of their "commonness of predication". When William of Ockham, in his commentary on Porphyry, raises the question as to the "sufficiency" of the classification of the predicables in view of the concept of "being", he makes a distinction between the universals (*universalia*) that are predicated *de pluribus*, and terms that are predicated *de omnibus*, that is, the *communia*. Because "being" is an "all predicate", it is excluded from the domain of the universals.[1] A similar distinction was made by Francis of Meyronnes in his commentary on Porphyry: he opposes the *transcendentia*, which are predicated of all things, to the *praedicabilia limitata*, limited to the categorial order (see ch. 1.4).

A lead for the 'transcensus' might have been Aristotle's claim in the third book of his *Metaphysics* that "being is not a genus" (see ch. 2.3.2). His claim is purely negative, it expresses that "being" is irrelevant for the question as to "what" something is. The claim does not imply a 'transcensus' until the relevance of what is excluded by the "horizon" of defining thought is seen and the ontological value signified by "being" is recognized.

On the scope of the *communia* there exist different opinions, which reflect diverse conceptions of transcendentality, as we shall see in the analysis of the ontological 'transcensus'. Aquinas interprets

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[1] William of Ockham, *Expositio in librum Porphyrii de Praedicabilibus*, prooem. 2 (ed. The Franciscan Institue, in: *Opera Philosophica*, Vol. II, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1978, pp. 15–16): "Sed sufficientia istorum universalium sic accipi debet; et hoc accipiendo 'universale' pro illo quod praedicatur de pluribus, et non de omnibus, per quod 'ens' excluditur".

ens commune as created being, for Meister Eckhart *Deus communis est* in contrast to the creatures, which are "this" or "that" being, and Duns Scotus holds that "being" is univocally common to God and creature. At the same time, however, he separates transcendality from commonness, insofar as commonness is no longer a necessary condition of a transcendental term. Yet in Scotism, too, what is common is *transcendens simpliciter*.

The 'transcensus' ends in a plurality of *communia*. How can they be distinguished from each other, since common terms do not exclude one another? Kant criticized "the transcendental philosophy of the Ancients" by suggesting in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 113) that the famous Scholastic thesis: "*quodlibet ens est unum, verum, bonum*" is "tautological". But this suggestion is wrong. Scholastic authors again and again emphasize that the *communia* are not synonyms and all account for the identity and difference of transcendental terms according to the model of the *proprium* in the Porphyrian order of the predicables. They choose this model, because it determines the structure of a *scientia*: every science seeks the properties that belong *per se* to its subject.

"Being" is related to the other common terms in the same manner as a subject is related to its property. Mark of the *proprium* is the convertibility with the subject. Therefore, the proofs of the convertibility of being and one, of being and true, and of being and good are a central topic in transcendental metaphysics. Most thirteenth-century thinkers maintained that the other mark of the *proprium*, which concerns the difference with the subject, is not simply applicable to the transcendental level. The predicable "property" adds a qualification to the subject that is *really* distinct from it; in the case of a property of being this would imply that the property is outside of being and thus nothing.

For this reason Philip the Chancellor, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent held that a transcendental property differs from being only by reason. Duns Scotus, however, strictly applies the difference between subject and predicate to the relation of being to the convertible transcendentals. There is more than a rational distinction between them, namely a real non-identity in the sense of a formal distinction. In order to make clear that this distinction does not eliminate the identity between being and the convertible transcendental terms the Scotist Peter Thomae applied a kind of predication to them that for Scotus himself was restricted to divine predication, that is, the

"identical predication". He argues that the new application of this kind of predication, in which subject and predicate are essentially the same, is possible since "being" possesses infinity in virtue of the illimitation of a transcendental (see ch. 10.3). William of Ockham finally explains the identity and the difference between the transcendental terms in a manner different to the models of Aquinas and Scotus (see ch. 11.1.3). He gives a semantic account by interpreting the convertible transcendentals as connotative terms: they signify primarily "being" and connote something else.

The problem of the transcendental predication: From equivocity to analogy and to univocity

Analysis of predicative structures plays an important role in medieval metaphysics. This also holds for the doctrine of the transcendentals, whose transcendence rests on the *communitas praedicationis*. But the 'transcensus' of the predicables by the most common notions raises a problem. In his *Quaestiones logicales* (composed around 1285), the Franciscan master Peter John Olivi expresses what is the general opinion in the thirteenth century: "The *ratio* of 'being' (*ens*) as well as that of 'unity' and 'truth' is so common to all things that it transcends (*transcendit*) the *ratio* of a genus and of all that is univocal (*omnis univoci*)".[2] Olivi explicitly states that being and the other transgeneric terms have a common *ratio*. But if they transcend the domain of univocity, the question arises as to the nature of this *ratio* that is the basis of their common predicability.

Porphyry, in his *Isagoge*, had denied the conceptual unity of "being". From Aristotle's statement that "being is not a genus", he infers that "being" has only commonness according to the name, not a common *ratio* corresponding to that name. The question as to the conceptual unity of the transcendentals was one of the structural elements in our study, outlined in the Introduction. The transcendental way of thought modified Porphyry's claim of the equivocity of being. Its position can be described as an evolution from equivocity to analogy and then from analogy to univocity.

The rise of the doctrine of the transcendentals in the thirteenth century is closely connected with the "invention of analogy" (to use the

[2] Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones logicales*, q. 15 (ed. S. F. Brown, in: *Traditio* 42 (1986), pp. 335–388, here p. 368).

expression suggested by Courtine) as a new, third type of predication besides univocity and equivocity. "Analogical" unity, which became the mark of a transcendental concept, appears as an alternative, standing midway (*medium*) between univocity and equivocity.

The medieval analogy is not identical with the Greek or "Aristotelian" analogy, which means an equality of two proportions. It is an original conception which, as the earliest systematic expositions in Albert the Great's works show, derives elements from a variety of sources. "Analogy" has arisen from the emancipation of a class of equivocals, namely what is equivocal "by deliberation", an ordered multiplicity that Boethius had distinguished from what is purely equivocal or equivocal "by chance". The medieval analogy of being incorporates Aristotle's "*pros hen*" predication, according to which being is said "in relation to one instance (*pros hen*) and one definite nature", a type of unity that is sufficient to guarantee the unity of a science of being. Albert also refers to the "Arabs", to their idea of the *convenientia*, that is, names related to one another by "agreement" of meaning. The concept of "being" belongs to them, since diverse things agree in being according to priority and posteriority.

A distinctive feature of the medieval doctrine is the twofold mode of analogy (*duplex analogia*) in being. One mode seeks community in the categorial diversity of being, an analogy we called "transcendental"; the other mode seeks a community in the diversity of created being and divine being, an analogy we designated as "theological". Without doubt the primary interest concerns the latter analogy. Most medieval accounts are presented in the context of discussions about the divine names. In this way the idea of the analogical unity of being acquires a central function in the onto-theological structure of metaphysics and offers a possibility to relate the transcendental domain, which is coextensive with created being in the thirteenth century, to the divine being. The theological mode of analogy incorporates Platonic elements of thought, such as the notion of analogy in Dionysius the Areopagite and the idea of participation. Aquinas's theory of the analogy of being, for instance, is embedded in a metaphysics of participation and causality.

The crux of the analogical predication of transcendental terms is their conceptual unity. What is predicated analogically is said of many things, not according to one and the same *ratio* but according to an order of priority and posteriority. The question as to whether this unity of order consists in an order of prior and posterior between

distinct *rationes* or with respect to one common *ratio* that is not equally participated in by the analogates remains open. This may be the reason for the great variety of analogy conceptions we have found in the preceding chapters; the doctrine of analogy in Thomas Aquinas is different from that in Henry of Ghent, Meister Eckhart or Francisco Suárez.

It turns out that the intermediate position of analogy could be elaborated upon in opposing directions, either more in the direction of equivocity or more in that of equivocity. Some versions of analogy incline towards equivocity. In his discussion of the unity of the concept of "being", Peter Auriol observes that according to the "common opinion", which he identifies with the doctrine of analogy, "being" does not express one common concept, but signifies a plurality of distinct *rationes*. The unity of analogy is really a multitude (see ch. 10.1.1). Other versions of analogy incline more towards univocity, a tendency that already comes to expression in the remarkable phrase "univocity of analogy" that Albert the Great uses for the commonness of the good. William of Ockham considers analogy as a weak form of univocity. The fundamental presupposition of Suárez's account of analogy is the unity of the concept of being: because of its transcendentality "being" is intrinsically attributed to both members of the analogy (see ch. 14.5). Henry of Ghent understands the analogical community of divine being and created being not only in the traditional sense of an order of priority and posteriority but also in the sense of a conceptual unity: the distinct concepts of divine being and created being are united in the confused common concept of "undeterminate being" (see ch. 7.3.1).

Duns Scotus challenges the view that "analogical" community is the mark of transcendentality. He argues that every metaphysical inquiry about God requires a stronger conceptual unity than the one provided by the version of analogy advanced by Henry of Ghent. Natural knowledge of God presupposes a concept of being univocally common to God and creature. Whereas for Henry of Ghent such a common *real* concept is impossible because of the radical diversity between divine being and created being, Scotus concludes that God and the creature, although they have no being in common, agree in the *concept* of being, since in it the diverse realities of infinite being and finite being are conceived in an imperfect manner. Univocity is the necessary condition of the science of metaphysics (see ch. 9.3).

Scotus's claim of the univocity of being means a turn in the medieval theory of the transcendentals. If one recalls Olivi's statement that the *ratio* of being "transcends the *ratio* of a genus and all that is univocal", one can imagine that Scotus's claim of the univocity of being seems to destroy the project of a transcendental philosophy for his contemporaries. But Scotus does not deny that being transcends the *ratio* of a genus; he denies that univocity is coextensive with the five Porphyrian predicables and extends the domain of univocity to the transcendental level. A controversial aspect of Scotus's doctrine of univocity, even among Sotists, is the distinction he makes between concept and predication. The Subtle Doctor holds the univocity of the *concept* of being but denies its univocal *predication* of all things. Being cannot be predicated *in quid* of the convertible transcendentals, because they are properties, formally distinct from being.

16.1.2 *Ontological* transcensus

Towards the transcendentia

What is transcended in this 'transcensus' is the horizon of the categories or predicaments. That to which the 'transcensus' is directed are the *transcendentia*, "being" and the notions convertible with it, "one", "true" and "good" (to mention the notions on which all agree). "Transcendental" in the Middle Ages is opposed to "categorical": a transcendental is not determined to one of the categories. The opposition is manifest in the most famous medieval account, that of Aquinas in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, in which he argues that the explication of "being" occurs in two ways, by *special* modes of being, signified by the categories, and by *general* modes of being, signified by the transcendentals.

The categorial order of things was Aristotle's discovery; the opening up of the transcendental dimension is an achievement of medieval thought. The new orientation already comes to expression in the titles of the literary production: treatises *De ente* (*et essentia*), *De ente et uno* (Pico della Mirandola), the disputed questions *De veritate* and the *Summa de bono*. Peter Thomae, in the prologue of *De ente*, reveals a general motive for the study of the transcendentals (see ch. 10.3). Knowledge of the *communia* is a precondition for knowledge of the *propria*. Since *transcendentia* are the *communissima*, it is "opportune" for the acquisition of any knowledge whatsoever to deal with them.

"Being", "one", "true" and "good" are basic words of philosophy, which designate common features of that which is. It would be possible to describe the history of philosophy from the perspective of one of these basic words as the history of the question of being, of unity, of truth or of goodness. The interesting aspect of the doctrine of the transcendentals is that it takes these terms together and considers them in their inner connection. In no other medieval writing does the "metaphysics of the transcendentals" have such a prominent place as in Eckhart's project of the *Opus tripartitum*, which remained, however, a torso. The most extensive and systematically elaborate exposition is given by Suárez in the first part of his *Disputationes metaphysicae*.

The ratio *of* transcendens

In the first chapter we offered a first orientation concerning the concept of *transcendens*, which was based on a fourteenth-century lexicon, the *Declaratio difficilium terminorum* of Armand of Bellevue. He distinguishes two senses of the term *transcendens*; one sense refers to "the nobility of being" and means the divine "transcendence", the other refers to "the commonness of predication" and means what is "transcendental" (see ch. 1.2). At the end of our study we can conclude that the general question "what is transcendental?" was rarely asked in medieval accounts of the doctrine; they are mostly focused on the properties of the singular transcendentals. An exception is the *Tractatus de transcendentibus* of Francis of Meyronnes, which begins with a discussion of the question: "*Quid est transcendens?*"

Historians of medieval philosophy have therefore attempted to define the general concept of transcendentality. A transcendental predicate, it is stated, "runs *through* all the categories and extends *beyond* to their first cause".[3] Another definition reads: "X is a transcendental if and only if the extension of the term that names X *is greater than and includes* the combined extensions of the terms that name each and every one of the categories into which being may be divided".[4]

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[3] J. Owens, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, Milwaukee 1963 [reprinted in Houston 1985], p. 111.

[4] J. J. E. Gracia, "The Transcendentals in the Middle Ages: An Introduction", in: *Topoi* 11 (1992), No. 2 (*The Transcendentals in the Middle Ages*), pp. 113–120, here p. 115.

Both definitions understand transcendentality in a purely extensional sense. The concept certainly has this aspect, for the transcendentals are the *communissima*, but not exclusively. The intensional account belongs to the core of the doctrine from the outset, since the differences between the transcendentals can only be explained in this way, as inner explications of the concept of "being".[5]

Both definitions mention two marks, which considered in themselves cannot obtain at the same time: what runs *through* all the categories does not go *beyond* them to the first cause. The two marks actually refer to the two different senses of the term *transcendens*. The phrase "what runs through all the categories" adopts a current description of *transcendens* in the sense of transcendental. The other mark expresses the fact that transcendental predicates are said of God who is *transcendens* in the sense of "going beyond" the categories. Both definitions endeavor to unite the two meanings of *transcendens* in one notion.

The definitions actually ignore the diversity of medieval views on the *ratio* of *transcendens* in the sense of "transcendental". Aquinas and other thirteenth-century authors conceive the notion as that which "goes around" (*circuit*) all categories or genera because of its commonness. The conception is inspired by texts in Aristotle, who, in his *Metaphysics* (IV, c. 2), concludes that there are as many species of "one" as there are of "being", and, in his *Ethics*, argues that the "good", just as "being", is found in all the categories. Scotus's philosophy meant a turn in the conception of transcendentality; he determines the *ratio* of *transcendens* in a negative manner as what is not determined to a genus. Consequently, "transcendental" are not only the *communia*, but the notion also includes the pure perfections, the disjunctive properties and even what is formally said of God. Because of this extension of the transcendental domain, we encountered in Scotists as Francis of Meyronnes and Peter Thomae the idea of "degrees" of transcendentality: terms which refer to every being are "more transcendental" than other transcendental terms.

The diversity of medieval views becomes manifest in the ways in which the relation between *transcendens* in the sense of transcendental and *transcendens* in the sense of divine transcendence is conceived. The

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[5] Contra: J. J. E. Gracia, "Suárez and the Doctrine of the Transcendentals", in: *Topoi* 11 (1992), No. 2 (*The Transcendentals in the Middle Ages*), pp. 121–133, here p. 131: "Suárez adopts an intensional conception of transcendentality that stands in contrast to the extensional conception common among figures from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries".

accounts of Thomas Aquinas, Meister Eckhart and Duns Scotus express this diversity and represent three different models of transcendentality. The features of Aquinas's model are: transcendental being (*ens commune*) extends solely to created being; the relation of God to "common being" is a causal relation; he has a commonness by causality. Typical of Eckhart's position is the identification of the transcendentals with God. God is common, he is solely "being" (*ens*); the creature is something "proper", "being this or that" (*ens hoc aut hoc*). This distinction implies an "ethics of the transcendentals", insofar as the creature should be detached from all particularity and be transformed into being as being. Duns Scotus brings the divine and what is common by predication together into the notion of *transcendens*, since both are not determined to a genus. Transcendental being is indifferent to finite and infinite being; it is univocally common to God and creature.

The "modernity" claim

In the first chapter we observed that the application of the term "transcendental" to medieval philosophy could suggest continuity with "modernity", the way of thought inaugurated by Immanuel Kant. At the end of our study we can conclude that the "modernity" claim has indeed affected the historiography of medieval transcendental thought, insofar as the Kantian transcendental-logical perspective has sometimes been taken as the exclusive criterion for the determination of transcendentality. What is labeled as "transcendental thought in the Middle Ages" proves to refer not to medieval doctrines of the *transcendentia*, but to thinkers who acknowledge the constitutive role of the human intellect in the relation to reality and thus show "a much more 'modern' Middle Ages than generally supposed".[6]

In the preceding chapters we met three clear examples of this tendency. Henry of Ghent's general concept of "thing" (*res*), which was "the point of departure" for a "new" metaphysics, has been presented as "the transcendental form in the Kantian sense" (see ch. 7.2.2).

[6] K. Flasch, *Die Metaphysik des Einen bei Nikolaus von Kues. Problemgeschichtliche Stellung und systematische Bedeutung*, Leiden 1973 (Studien zur Problemgeschichte der antiken und mittelalterlichen Philosophie, 7), Part I, ch. 3: "Metaphysik und transzendentales Denken im Mittelalter", pp. 105–154. See the extensive note on the term "transcendental", pp. 103–104. *Ibid.*, p. 156: the statement about "a much more 'modern' Middle Ages".

Dietrich of Freiberg's treatise *De origine rerum praedicamentalium* has been interpreted as an anticipation of Kant's "Copernican Revolution" (see ch. 8.1.1). William of Ockham has been seen as an important link in the history of transcendental thought, because he commenced "the transformation of the doctrine of the categories into transcendental philosophy", which was completed in Kant (see ch. 11.1.1).

In all three cases our conclusion in the chapters concerned was that the modernity claim is untenable. We add one observation to this conclusion: in the cases of Dietrich of Freiberg and William of Ockham, the proponents of the modernity claim are focused on their doctrines of the categories. The reason for this focus is that Kant re-interprets the categories as the transcendental *a priori* concepts of the intellect; moreover, the medieval accounts of the categories are not identical with Aristotle's doctrine, but contain interesting innovations—Dietrich examines "the origin of the categorial things" and Ockham introduces the distinction between absolute and connotative categories. However, the proponents of the modernity claim wrongly infer from this fact that a special doctrine of the transcendentals lost its relevance for Dietrich or was dropped by Ockham. It is significant that Dietrich, in the prologue of *De origine*, connects metaphysics with the consideration of the transcendentals in the medieval sense.

A neglected topic in most modern studies on the medieval doctrine is the constitutive role of the intellect in determining the transcendental notions. A good illustration is Henry of Ghent's account, which emphasizes the distinguishing power of the intellect in the explication of the general modes of being (see ch. 7.1.1). Not the *nature* of the extramental thing distinguishes the transcendental notions, but solely the *ratio* of the intellect that distinguishes what is indistinct in itself. Etienne Gilson even suggests that the transcendentals are not concerned with being as such but with being as *known*.[7] Moreover, a fundamental aspect of transcendental thought in the Middle Ages is a third 'transcensus', the resolution to the beginning of thought.

[7] E. Gilson, *Constantes philosophiques de l'être*, Paris 1983 (Bibliothèque des Textes Philosophiques, 8), pp. 115–117.

16.1.3 *Epistemological* transcensus

Towards the first concepts (prima)

The third 'transcensus' is epistemological in nature; the doctrine of the transcendentals is a doctrine of what is first in a cognitive respect.[8] "Being", "one", "true" and "good" are the *prima*, "the first concepts" or "the first intelligibles". They are the firsts, because they are the end term of the method of "analysis" or "resolution" (*resolutio*) through which our concepts are ultimately reduced to an irreducible concept. What is last in the "analysis" is the first in the sense that it is the condition of all further intellectual knowledge. The method of resolution could be called "transcendental" in the Kantian sense, because according to Kant "in the transcendental science the point is no longer to go forward but to go backward".[9] The doctrine of the transcendentals is a going back to that which is implicit in every cognition.

Already in Philip the Chancellor's account (see ch. 3.4) the *communissima* "being", "one", "true" and "good" are called "the firsts" (*prima*) and "simple", "because there is not something prior into which they can be resolved (*fiat resolutio*)". Albert the Great uses the method of "resolution" as an avenue to what is first and fundamental. He distinguishes between the resolution of the *sancti*, i.e. the reduction of what is caused to the first cause, and the resolution of the *philosophus*, i.e. the reduction of something to its most universal predicate that constitutes it intrinsically (see ch. 5.2). Since what is predicated is "the form of the whole" (*forma totius*), this resolution does not end in the essence but in "being" (*ens*), which is therefore the "first".

Thomas Aquinas makes a similar, more systematic distinction between two kinds of resolution in his discussion of the methods used in metaphysics. The resolution *secundum rem* proceeds from the effects to the causes; the ultimate term of this resolution is attained when one arrives at the first and most universal cause, God. The resolution *secundum rationem* proceeds from the more particular forms

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[8] Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "What is First and Most Fundamental? The Beginnings of Transcendental Philosophy", in: J. A. Aertsen / A. Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, Berlin-New York 1998 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 26), pp. 177–192.

[9] Immanuel Kant, *Reflexionen zur Metaphysik*, 5075 (ed. Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. XVIII, Berlin 1928, p. 80): "In der transscendentalen Wissenschaft ist nicht mehr darum zu thun, vorwärts, sondern zurück zu gehen".

of a thing to the most universal ones; the ultimate term of this resolution is "the consideration of being and that which belongs to being as such".[10] Aquinas begins his account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, with referring to the latter kind of resolution: "That which the intellect first conceives, as best known, and into which it resolves (*resolvit*) all its conceptions, is being (*ens*)".

The doctrine of the first concepts is an Arabic inheritance. Avicenna's argument for the necessity of primary notions rests on an analogy between the order of "assent" or demonstration and the order of "conception" or definition. Just as in the order of demonstration a reduction is necessary to first principles that are known *per se*, so in the order of definition a reduction to first concepts is necessary that are conceived *per se*. Medieval authors were fascinated by Avicenna's argument, but at the same time radicalized the idea of a cognitive first. There is not only an analogy between the order of demonstration and the order of concepts insofar as there is a first in both orders, but also a relation of foundation: that which is first in the order of concepts *founds* that which is first in the order of demonstration. The doctrine of the transcendentals is a doctrine of what is "fundamental".

The "foundational" aspect of the transcendentals is an original feature of Aquinas's doctrine (see ch. 6.3). He gives a "transcendental" foundation to the first principle of theoretical reason, the principle of contradiction, which Aristotle called the *anhypotheton* of human thought, by grounding it on "being" as the first concept of the intellect. Aquinas gives a similar foundation to practical knowledge. The first principle of practical reason, "Good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided", is founded on the first concept of practical reason, "the good".

A theological transformation of the first concepts occurs in Henry of Ghent's philosophy (see ch. 7.3.2). He effects a synthesis of Avicenna's doctrine of the first concepts with Augustine's reduction of

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[10] Albert the Great, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 5, n. 20 ad 5 (ed. P. Simon, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXXVII/1, Münster 1972, p. 314). Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De trinitate* q. 6, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. L, Rome 1992, pp. 159–160). There is no comprehensive study on the medieval method of resolution. Cf. L. Oeing-Hanhoff, "Die Methoden der Metaphysik im Mittelalter", in: P. Wilpert (ed.), *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter. Ihr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung*, Berlin 1963 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 2), pp. 71–91. See, however, the critical observations in J. A. Aertsen, "Method and Metaphysics. The *via resolutionis* in Thomas Aquinas", in: *The New Scholasticism* 63 (1989), pp. 405–418.

the particular, creaturely good to the good itself, God—"the good" here stands for all the transcendental perfections. It is one of the few moments, in which Augustine appears in the history of the doctrine of the transcendentals. By his claim of a divine moment in the first concepts—"being absolutely", "good absolutely"—Henry creates a new "way" to the existence of God, which he calls "a priori", because it is based on what is first conceived.

The debate on what is first known

In the thirteenth century a debate on the first known started: Is it being in general or rather the first being, since knowledge of what is relative presupposes knowledge of the Absolute? The debate can be seen as the medieval version of the search for a systematic beginning of human thought.[11] The debate came to a close at the beginning of the sixteenth century with the lecture *Quaestio de primo cognito*, held by the Italian philosopher Marcantonio Zimara at Padua in 1508.

The starting point of the medieval debate was the Franciscan position on what is first known. Bonaventure argues that the resolution of human knowledge is not yet complete with the reduction to "being" (see ch. 4.2.2). Whereas Aquinas distinguishes between two kinds of resolution, a conceptual one (*secundum rationem*) and a causal one (*secundum rem*), Bonaventure sees them as successive stages in one process. A "complete resolution" of any created being implies the reduction to the first cause and requires an understanding of the most actual and absolute being. What is first known is the *divine* being; what is prior in the order of cognition is identical with what is prior in the order of being.

Thomas Aquinas rejects the Franciscan view and criticizes the alleged parallelism between the cognitive and the ontological order (see ch. 6.4.2). His main argument is the dependence of human cognition on sense experience. The first intelligible is not what is first "absolutely" (*simpliciter*), that is, God, but that which is first "for us", being in general. But Henry of Ghent reasserts the complete correspondence of the cognitive order and the ontological order. On the basis of his theological transformation of the first concepts, he holds that God's

[11] Cf. W. Goris, *Absolute Beginners. Der mittelalterliche Beitrag zu einem Ausgang vom Unbedingten*, Leiden-Boston 2007 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgechichte des Mittelalters, 93).

quiddity is what is first known in natural cognition, although it is conceived implicitly, confusedly and indeterminately in the first concepts (see ch. 7.3.3).

In the course of the debate a philosophically interesting development took place, which can be described as "the turn to the object". Aquinas connects what is first known with the concept of *obiectum*, another medieval innovation. The effect of "the objective turn" is that the first known is interpreted as "the proper object" of the intellect and that the doctrine of the first concepts, which originally belongs to the theory of science, is now referred to the theory of the human faculties and powers, for the correlate of *obiectum* is *potentia* and *habitus*. In this way the discussion of what is first known acquires a critical epistemological function. It shows Aquinas the horizon of human knowledge; philosophical reason cannot attain a quidditative knowledge of immaterial substances.

Duns Scotus opens a new phase in the debate by his distribution of the first object of the intellect. He distinguishes three orders of intelligibility, each of which having its own first object: the order of origin, the order of perfection and the order of adequation (see ch. 9.4.1). The last order is something new and crucial; the first adequate object is the object that is commensurate to the intellective power and thus designates the scope of human reason. Scotus argues that "being" is the first adequate object of the intellect, but not according to commonness alone, for "being" is not predicated *in quid* of all predicables. "Being" has a twofold primacy: with respect to some intelligible objects by way of commonness, but with respect to others by way of virtuality (see ch. 9.4.4).

In fourteenth-century discussions the "objective" primacy of "being" was contested from two different perspectives. Peter Auriol and William of Ockham claim that what is first by commonness, "being", is not the adequate "moving object" of the intellect, for common being cannot move the intellect nor cause an intellectual cognition. The adequate moving object is the "proper entity" of a thing (Peter Auriol) or the singular as singular (Ockham). Another objection to the primacy of being was that the notion is not commensurate to the scope of intelligibility. The Carmelite master John Baconthorpe mentions in his survey of the different positions in the debate on the first adequate object of the intellect the view that something more common than *ens transcendens* is this object, namely the disjunction "being or non-being" (see ch. 15.3). Baconthorpe defends the opinion that

transcendental being is the first adequate object, but introduces a distinction concerning this object. The intellect has two acts, "simple understanding" and "complex understanding", which both have their own first object. "Being" is the first object in the act of simple understanding, but the disjunction "being or non-being" is the first object of complex understanding.

16.2 Transcendentals and metaphysics

The transcensus *of metaphysics*

The threefold 'transcensus' toward the *communia*, the *transcendentia* and the *prima* in the medieval conceptions of transcendentality corresponds with the transcending movement expressed in the term 'metaphysics' and defines the proper nature of this science. Metaphysics was conceived in the Middle Ages as the *scientia communis*, as the *scientia transcendens* and as the *philosophia prima* in a new sense.

Avicenna urges the necessity of a science that studies what is common to all things, such as being qua being, and argues that "common being" is the "proper subject" of First Philosophy. His rejection of the theological conception marks "the second beginning of metaphysics" which is characterized by an ontological conception (see ch. 2.4.1). Several medieval authors repeat Avicenna's urge. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, establishes that *ens commune* is the subject of metaphysics; this science is the *scientia communis*.[12]

Duns Scotus explains the name 'metaphysics' by the phrase *scientia transcendens*, since this discipline is concerned with the *transcendentia*. In the first systematic treatise of metaphysics in the Middle Ages, Nicholas Bonet gives a similar explanation of the name: this science is called "metaphysics", since it deals with the first quiddity that transcends the ten highest genera, "being" (see ch. 10.4). For Suárez (*Disputationes Metaphysicae* I, sect. 4, n. 13) metaphysics is a science that explains the *transcendentales rationes* of being, without whose knowledge an exact treatment of things is hardly possible in any science.

[12] Aquinas uses both phrases in the prologue to his *Metaphysics* commentary. *In Metaphysicorum*, prooem. (ed. M.-R. Cathala, Turin-Rome 1950, pp. 1–2): "Unde restat quod in una communi scientia huiusmodi tractentur. (…) ista scientia (…) non tamen considerat quodlibet eorum ut subiectum, sed ipsum solum ens commune".

The idea of a *philosophia prima* acquires in the Middle Ages a new epistemological foundation: Metaphysics is First Philosophy, not because it treats the first and highest *being*, but because it deals with what is first *known*, being in general, the *primum obiectum* of the intellect.[13]

A typical consequence of the conception of metaphysics as the *scientia communis* is that the question as to its distinction from logic has to be discussed. According to Aquinas there is an "affinity" between both because of their commonness: the two sciences deal with *ens in communi*.[14] Both logic and metaphysics have a universal scope and are a *scientia communis*.[15] However, medieval authors carefully distinguish between the logical and metaphysical order, since these sciences consider what is common differently. The proper subject of logic is "being of reason" (*ens rationis*), such as the notions of "genus" and "species"; the proper subject of metaphysics is *ens reale*.

The negative conclusion in the preceding chapter that metaphysics was not conceived as a "supertranscendental science" in the Middle Ages can now be completed by a positive conclusion. A characteristic feature of medieval philosophy from Aquinas to Suárez is the understanding of metaphysics as a transcendental *scientia realis*. But there exists a diversity of opinions on the precise meaning of "real", as it will become clear (below) from the discussion of the *ratio* of "being".

The structure of this *scientia* is determinative for the elaboration of the doctrine of the transcendentals. That was the reason for paying so much attention to the "basic question" of the proper subject of metaphysics, the second structural element of our study. The medieval answer to this question, being qua being or being in general, defines

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[13] Cf. J. A. Aertsen, "Why is Metaphysics called 'First Philosophy' in the Middle Ages?", in: G. T. Doolan (ed.), *The Science of Being as Being. Metaphysical Investigations*, Washington, D.C., 2011 (Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy) [forthcoming].

[14] Thomas Aquinas, *In VII Metaphysicorum*, lect.3, 1308 (ed. M.-R. Cathala, p. 327): "haec scientia [*sc.* metaphysica] habet quandam affinitatem cum logica propter utriusque communitatem". Cf. *Super Boetium De trinitate*, q. 6, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. L, pp. 159): "Utraque scientia communis est et circa idem subiectum quodammodo".

[15] For that reason, there can be "logical transcendentals". For this idea, cf. G. Pini, "The Transcendentals of Logic: Thirteenth-Century Discussions on the Subject Matter of Aristotle's 'Categories'", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen. Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen zum 65. Geburtstag*, Berlin-New York 2003 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 30), pp. 140–159.

not only the (ontological) conception of metaphysics but also determines the doctrine of the transcendentals, insofar as "being" proves to be the first among these notions. The task of every science is to examine the properties that belong *per se* to its subject. The relation between *subiectum* and *passio* is, at the same time, determinative for the relation between "being" and the other transcendentals. Medieval authors realized, however, that the application of the "property" model to the science of being causes problems—Suárez systematically summed up the difficulties (see ch. 14.3.1: "Does being as being have properties?"). As we have found in our analysis of the logical 'transcensus' toward the most common notions, various solutions have been proposed for the difference between being and its properties: a "rational" distinction, a "formal" distinction or a relation of "connotation".

Transcendentals and the divine: Onto-theology

1. From the very beginning the medieval concern with the transcendentals was motivated by a theological interest. The most extensive account of these notions in the thirteenth century appears in the *Summa Halensis*, where it serves as the metaphysical basis for the explanation of the divine attributes "unity", "truth" and "goodness". The connection between the transcendentals and the divine is central in the reception of (pseudo-)Dionysius's work *De divinis nominibus* by Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. Transcendental names are also divine names; "being", "one", "true" and "good" are even the primary divine names because of their "commonness" according to Aquinas (see ch. 6.5.1).

In the first exposition of the doctrine of the transcendentals in the *Summa de bono*, Philip the Chancellor makes a distinction with regard to the predication of "being", "one", "true" and "good": they are sometimes said *communiter*, and sometimes "appropriated", that is, treated as proper to God. This fact raises the problem of the "transcendental predication" of common terms and their conceptual unity. As we observed in the preceding section (see ch. 16.1.1), the medieval theories of analogy and univocity are primarily concerned with their applicability to divine being and created being. What holds for the logical 'transcensus' is also true for the ontological 'transcensus' to the *transcendentia* and the epistemological 'transcensus' to the *prima*: in both cases it appears that what is common or "transcendental" and what is beyond everything or "transcendent" are intertwined. The diversity

of medieval views on the *ratio* of transcendentality is connected with the ways in which the relation between what is common and what is divine is conceived. The doctrine of the first concepts of the intellect is reinterpreted by Henry of Ghent in the sense that he connects the primacy of these notions with a divine moment.

2. A specific instance of the relation between the transcendentals and the divine bears upon a fundamental doctrine of Christian theology, the doctrine of the Trinity.[16] Christian faith teaches that God is triune: the three Persons Father, Son, and Spirit are one in the divine essence but are really distinct from each other by their relations of origin. Most medieval theologians are of the opinion that natural reason cannot demonstrate the existence of the Trinity but is able to render this datum of faith intelligible.

The clarification occurs through what theologians call "appropriation". Thomas Aquinas describes this act as "to draw what is common toward what is proper" (*commune trahere ad proprium*). An attribute belonging to the divine essence and thus common to the Trinity is "appropriated" to one of the Persons because of its similarity with an attribute that is proper to that Person.[17] The common or essential attribute of "truth", for instance, is "appropriated" to the Son, who proceeds in an intellectual manner, namely as Word (Logos).

Patristic thought, in particular Augustine in his work *De trinitate*, had handed down several trios of trinitarian appropriations. The doctrine of the transcendentals provided a new model: the appropriation in terms of the notions "one", "true" and "good" was presented for the first time in the *Summa Halensis*—not by coincidence, for the trinitarian motive was a distinctive feature of the Franciscan form of the doctrine. Transcendentals are a preeminently suitable model for the appropriation of common divine attributes because of their relations of identity and difference. "One", "true" and "good" all refer to the

[16] Cf. N. Kretzmann, "Trinity and Transcendentals", in: R. Feenstra / C. Plantinga (eds.), *Trinity, Incarnation and Atonement*, Notre Dame, Ind., 1989 (Library of Religious Philosophy, 1), pp. 79–109.

[17] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 7, a. 3 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXII/1, Rome 1975, p. 203): "appropriare nihil est aliud quam commune trahere ad proprium. Illud autem quod est commune toti Trinitati non potest trahi ad proprium alicuius personae ex hoc quod magis uni personae quam alii conveniat—hoc enim aequalitati personarum repugnaret—, sed ex hoc quod id quod est commune habet maiorem similitudinem cum proprio unius personae quam cum proprio alterius".

divine essence, but through their differences they give an indication, and in that way a clarification, of what is proper to each of the three Persons. The appropriation of the transcendentals to the divine Persons is based on the threefold divine causality: "one" is appropriated to the efficient causality of the Father, "the true" to the exemplary causality of the Son, and "the good" to the final causality of the Spirit.

Meister Eckhart intends a rational understanding of the Trinity through the transcendental notions. He presents a systematic exposition of the transcendentals "being", "one", "true" and "good" twice, and both accounts are meant to explain the existence of the Trinity. The trinitarian appropriations had an effect on the dynamic order of these notions (see ch. 8.2.3). It leads to the primordiality of the "one" in Eckhart, since it is "the first productive principle".

3. The relation between the transcendentals and the divine was seen as an issue to be treated in metaphysics. Most medieval thinkers adhere to the inner unity of the science of being and of the divine, and conceive metaphysics as an "onto-theology". Exceptions are two fourteenth-century masters from the Scotist "school", Nicholas Bonet and Francis of Marchia.

Bonet plainly rejects the onto-theological structure of metaphysics. "Our metaphysics", he asserts, only deals with "purely metaphysical issues" (*pure metaphysicalia*) and relegates "theological matters" to another science (see ch. 10.4.2). Francis of Marchia concludes that there are two metaphysical disciplines, a "general" metaphysics and a "particular" metaphysics, which are distinct sciences because of their different subjects. General metaphysics deals with what is common to things; the subject-matter of particular metaphysics is the immaterial (see ch. 10.5.3). Duns Scotus himself dismisses the idea of splitting up metaphysics into two sciences. The study of the divine cannot be separated from "transcendental metaphysics", since "all things naturally knowable of God will be (in terms of) transcendentals" (see ch. 9.1.2). It is a general conviction of medieval metaphysics that natural knowledge of God is only attainable by means of common concepts.

The onto-theological structure, however, was elaborated upon in different manners. Aquinas's model was representative of several thirteenth-century thinkers. The subject of metaphysics, *ens commune*, does not include God; the relation of God to being in general is a causal relation. This model provides a theological foundation for the transcendental determinations of things, since the causality of the first

and highest cause is characterized by the universality—one could also say "transcendentality"—of its effect. In Bonaventure's itinerary of the mind to God, transcendentals are "vestiges" of God, since they represent God as the cause of things. Aquinas's onto-theological conception of metaphysics enables him to connect the Platonic-Dionysian reduction of things to Being itself or the Good itself with the transcendental perspective, because, as he observes in the prologue of his Dionysius commentary, God is the cause of the *maxime communia* (see ch. 6.5.2).

A distinct onto-theological model was presented by Henry of Ghent. God is not outside the *ens commune* of the subject of metaphysics, but part of it. Henry designs a new "way" to God, which he calls "metaphysical" and "*a priori*" because the argument is based on the first concepts of the intellect, "being", "one", "true" and "good". The result of Henry's "way" is knowledge of God in his most general attributes, for the argument shows that the *ratio* of the first being, one, true and good, God, is understood in the first concepts (see ch. 7.3.2).

The onto-theological structure of Scotus's transcendental metaphysics is determined by two innovations, the claim of the univocity of the concept of "being" common to God and creatures, and the introduction of disjunctive transcendentals. The latter notions explicate the inner modes of being, from which the univocal concept abstracts; this explication comes to an end in the proof of the existence of infinite being, God. Scotus's metaphysics is not a "pure" ontology as it includes a theology; the knowledge of the first being is the inner completion of the transcendental explication of being (see ch. 9.5.2).

The ratio *of "being"* (ens)

Medieval metaphysics is a science of being or an onto-logy, insofar as the proper subject of this science is being as being or being in general (*ens commune*). The transcendental character of being appears from its opposite "nothing"; outside of being is nothing. Albert the Great calls "being" "the first foundation" (*primum fundamentum*) of things, Aquinas presents the idea of creation (*ex nihilo*) as the end term of the philosophical reflection on the question of being, since creation is an origin that presupposes nothing in what is caused and thus concerns being *as being* (see ch. 6.2).

The other transcendentals are "explications" of being in general, they determine what is not yet expressed by the name 'being'. But

what is the meaning of "being" itself? Peter Auriol was of the opinion that because of its indetermination "being" does not have a distinct *ratio*; it coincides with the *rationes* of all other things (see ch. 10.1.1). Yet this is not the common opinion: it ascribes to transcendental being a proper *ratio*, which, however, is conceived differently. In medieval treatises, the main conceptions of being are dual, namely an understanding as "actuality" and one as "quiddity".

In his commentary on Porphyry's *De praedicabilibus*, Albertus Magnus mentions an argument for the non-generic character of "being", taken from Arab thinkers, which is quite different from Aristotle's reason for the thesis that being is not a genus. In the order of universals the more general concept is implied in the more specific concept: if "man" is, "animal" is. It does not follow, however, that if "substance" is, "being" (*ens*) is. The reason is that "being" surpasses the categorial order of what something is. It signifies "that which exists in act", and existence does not belong to the essence of something (see ch. 2.2: "Change of perspective"). The argument presupposes an ontological difference that is fundamental to Arab metaphysics, namely the distinction between "essence" and "existence". Because "being" is outside the essential order, Avicenna understands it as something added to the essence of things in the manner of an accident.

Aquinas takes issue with Avicenna's understanding of "being". "Being" is not related to the essence as an accident but as act; *esse* is the "actuality" (*actualitas*) of every form or essence, the prerequisite condition that a thing *is*. In his account of the transcendentals in *De veritate* q. 1, a. 1, Aquinas explains his concept of "being" by opposing it to another "absolute" transcendental, the notion of *res* that Avicenna had introduced. While the name 'thing' expresses the quiddity or essence of something, the name 'being' (*ens*) is taken from "the act of being" (*actus essendi*).

The interpretation of the relation between the notions of *ens* and *res* was crucial for the development of the medieval understanding of being and reality.[18] Already shortly after Aquinas's death, a new

[18] There exists no comprehensive study on *res* as a philosophical concept. A good overview is offered by J. F. Courtine, "Res", in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. VIII, Basel 1992, pp. 892–901. The volume *Res. Atti del III^o Colloquio internazionale del Lessico intellettuale europeo*, ed. by M. Fattori and M. Bianchi, Rome 1982 (Lessico intellettuale europeo, 26), contains two relevant contributions: J. Hamesse, "*Res* chez les auteurs philosophiques du 12^e et 13^e siècles ou le passage de la neutralité

ontology was presented by Henry of Ghent, in which "being" (*ens*) is synonymous with "quidditative being". In his exposition of the transcendentals in *Summa* a. 34, q. 3, he determines the concept of "being" using the term *certitudo* through which Avicenna had explicated the meaning of "thing". Henry identifies "being" with *res* in the sense of *ratitudo*, which signifies a thing possessing "fixity" and "stability". What is "real" in this sense is distinguished, on the one hand, from what is imaginary or fictional, that is, from *res* in the sense of *reor, reris*, a thing according to opinion only, which is the most common concept, opposed to "nothing". But on the other, it is also distinguished from what has actual existence or "actuality". The quidditative reality has an aptitude for actual existence in the extramental world, an aptitude that Henry calls "being of essence" (*esse essentiae*). For Duns Scotus, as for Henry, "being" is a quidditative notion, the ultimate and most common "what" in the resolution of concepts. The reality of "being" includes an aptitude for existence, which Scotus interprets as a "non-repugnance to being (*esse*)".

Suárez concludes the medieval debate in his second "Metaphysical Disputation" (see ch. 14.2.2). He wants do justice to both the understanding of "being" in terms of "actuality" and that in terms of "quiddity" by distinguishing two senses of "being", a participial sense and a nominal sense. If being is taken as a participle, its *ratio* is "what exists in act"; if it is taken as a noun, the *ratio* of "being" is "what has a real essence", "real", because it is "apt to real existence". "Being" in the latter sense is synonymous with "thing" (*res*) according to Suárez; the terms differ only in the etymology of their names. The participial *ratio* of "being" is related to the nominal *ratio* as the more contracted concept of being to the less contracted; the participial sense is more contracted, since it signifies that which has a real essence together with actual existence. Suárez concludes that the nominal sense of being is the transcendental *ratio* of being and is the being considered by metaphysics, for every science prescinds from the actual existence of its subject. Suárez thus adopts the Henrician-Scotist understanding

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à la spécificité", pp. 91–104; L. Oeing-Hanhoff, "*Res* comme concept transcendental et sur-transcendental", pp. 285–296. Cf. also R. Darge, "Suarez' Analyse der Transzendentalien 'Ding' und 'Etwas' im Kontext der scholastischen Metaphysiktradition", in: *Theologie und Philosophie* 75 (2000), pp. 339–358. J. A. Aertsen, "'Res' as Transcendental: Its Introduction and Significance", in: G. Federici Vescovini (ed.), *Le problème des transcendantaux du XIV^e^ au XVII^e^ siècle*, Paris 2002, pp. 139–157.

of being; "actuality", which was seen in Thomism as a prerequisite condition that an essence is, is interpreted as an addition to the order of essence, by which the concept of "being" is contracted.

16.3 Metaphysics of the one

The search for unity is a basic concern in the history of philosophy. Augustine asserts that "the consideration of all philosophers is concerned with the one (*unum*)". And more than a thousand years later Hegel states that the whole of philosophy is "nothing but the study of the determinations of unity".[19] From Philip the Chancellor to Suárez, transcendental thought is also concerned with the philosophical key word "one" and includes a metaphysics thereof. It examines what unity is and the relation of transcendental unity to other kinds of unity, such as numerical unity, and to multitude, but its main issue is the correlation or convertibility between being and one.

Ontology and henology

1. Transcendental metaphysics considers the one as a property of being. The one is the first in the sequel of the other transcendental notions; it is "the closest" to being (Aquinas) or "at most conjoined (*maxime conjuncta*) with entity" (Suárez), because the one adds only a negation to being.[20] Unity pertains to every thing in itself, and what is absolute is prior to what is relational, such as the "true" and the "good".

It is also for historical reasons that the one enjoys priority in the order of the transcendental properties of being. The priority is suggested by the place that Aristotle gives to this notion in book IV of the *Metaphysics*. He treats the "one" immediately after the ontological determination of this science as the study of being in general and its properties. Apparently "one" is the first transcendental property, for Aristotle continues his account with some explicit observations about

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[19] Augustine, *De ordine*, II, c. 7, n. 24. G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* (ed. H. Glockner, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. 15, Stuttgart 1928, p. 113). Nicholas of Cusa refers to Augustine's statement in *De venatione sapientiae*, c. 21, n. 59 (ed. R. Klibansky / I. G. Senger, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XII, Hamburg 1982, p. 56).

[20] Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3. Suárez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, IV, prol.

its relation to being: being and the one are the same and one single nature, but are different qua concept. The impact of this text is manifest in the first exposition of the transcendentals by Philip the Chancellor, for whom the *ratio* of the "one" is the model for determining the concepts of "true" and "good". Because "one" is the first property, *unum* is also the place where various authors, such as Duns Scotus (see ch. 9.5.1) and William of Ockham (11.1.3), explain their views of the identity and difference between being and the other transcendentals.

2. The metaphysics of the one offers an alternative to the Neoplatonic doctrine of the One, for which Etienne Gilson introduced the term "henology".[21] The central claim of this metaphysics is the convertibility of being and one, which expresses the transcendental character of *unum*. The thesis has an anti-Platonic meaning, insofar as it is opposed to the Neoplatonic conception of the One as what is absolutely transcendent and "beyond being". The opposition is conveyed by Nicholas of Cusa, who criticizes the convertibility thesis from henological perspective (see ch. 12.2). The "one", he maintains, is more comprehensive (*capacius*) than "being", for it encompasses not only those things which actually are but also those which can come into being. The one is not a property consequent upon being but prior to it.

Meister Eckhart offers a kind of synthesis between ontology and henology. For him "one" is a transcendental property of being, but at the same time a notion that adopts some features of the henological one (see ch. 8.2.3). "One" is "what is first determinated" (*primum determinatum*), because it adds a negation to "being". Eckhart interprets this negation as "the negation of negation", of which the result is that "one" signifies an affirmation and something positive, namely the "purity" and "fullness" of being. Since the "one" is determinated in this sense, the one (and not being, which is completely indeterminate) is "the first that is productive" (*primum productivum*), the first principle of every emanation. *Unum* has a more prominent place in Eckhart than in earlier accounts of the transcendentals due to its primordiality.

At the end of the fifteenth century the Renaissance philosopher Pico della Mirandola composed the treatise *De ente et uno* (see ch. 13.2). In the prologue, he makes clear that his focus will be on the "concord"

[21] E. Gilson, *L'être et l'essence*, Paris 1948, p. 42.

(*concordia*) of the Aristotelian ontology and the Platonic henology. Pico argues that both the assertion that nothing is more common than being and the assertion that something is above being are true affirmations, because the term 'being' can be taken in different senses. He gives a differentiated analysis of the relations between God and the transcendental names, which vary from the identity of both to God's transcendence with regard to these names.

3. The metaphysics of the one also distinguishes itself from the henology through its conception of the "many". Multiplicity is seen in Neoplatonism as a "fall" from the One. The further the process of emanation moves away from the One, the larger the plurality becomes. Multiplicity is a sign of imperfection, an evil.[22]

In reaction to this view Aquinas wants to show that "one" does not deny "multitude". To that end he describes the genesis of the primary notions of the intellect (see ch. 6.4.1): (i) "being" (*ens*); (ii) the negation of being (*non-ens*); (iii) "division": this being is not that being; (iv) "one" (*unum*): this being is undivided in itself; (v) "multitude" (*multitudo*), which expresses that this being is divided from that being, and that each one of them is one (undivided) in itself. From this description it becomes clear that "one" is the negation of division and not of multiplicity.[23] Thus, when something is called "one", this does not exclude there being something else outside it with which it forms a multitude.

Aquinas's account of the relational transcendentals, particularly of the notion of *aliquid*, presupposes the plurality of beings. In some places of his work he states explicitly that *multitudo* belongs to the *transcendentia*.[24] The transcendental character means that "multitude" is not limited to the category of quantity and the material world. Thomas even holds that the greatest multitude is not found in material

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[22] Cf. Meister Eckhart, *Expositio sancti Evangelii secundum Iohannem*, n. 114 (in: *Die lateinischen Werke* [= LW], edited on behalf of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Stuttgart 1936–, Vol. III, p. 100); *Expositio libri Genesis*, n. 88 (LW I, Stuttgart 1964, p. 246): "(…) multitudo, casus est ab uno".

[23] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 30, a. 3 ad 3 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. IV, Rome 1888, p. 340): "unum non est remotivum multitudinis, sed divisionis".

[24] Thomas Aquinas, *In III Physicorum*, lect. 8, 352; lect. 12, 394. *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 30, a. 3 and ad 2; q. 50, a. 3 ad 1. Cf. J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals. The Case of Thomas Aquinas*, Leiden – New York – Köln 1996 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 52), pp. 223–226.

objects, but in immaterial things because of their perfection.[25] Transcendental multitude is a sign of perfection.

Does this notion, however, fit into Aquinas's doctrine of the transcendentals? *Transcendentia* are convertible with "being" and with one another, but "multitude" is not convertible with "one" and belongs to beings, not to being. It seems that Aquinas introduces with "multitude" a different type of transcendental to the convertible notions explained in *De veritate*. Indeed he says: "Multitude belongs to the transcendentals, insofar as being is divided by the one and the many"; the one and the many form the primary differences of being.[26] The same ambivalence is to be found in Duns Scotus, who sees the "one" as a transcendental convertible with being, but at the same time lists "the one or many" among the disjunctive transcendentals.

"One" and "being": Difficulties

1. In his commentary on book IV of the *Metaphysics*, Duns Scotus observes that "the question on one and being has so many difficulties". He enumerates four of them: (i) "Whether the one expresses something positive". (ii) "Whether the one is convertible with being". (iii) "Whether the one that is convertible with being is the principle of number or something *simpliciter transcendens*". (iv) "Whether the one when it is *transcendens* expresses some other thing (*res*) than being".[27] Scotus remarks that the last difficulty is common to all transcendentals; it concerns the general problem of the identity and difference between these notions. The first three problems, however, are specific to the "one" and reflect central aspects of the medieval discussions about the transcendental one.

Unlike the *ratio* of the "true" and the "good", the *ratio* of the "one" has hardly been the subject of controversies. From Philip the Chancellor to Suárez Aristotle's determination of the "one" as the negation of

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[25] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 50, a. 3.

[26] *Ibid.*, q. 30, a. 3 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. IV, p. 339): "Multitudo (…) est de transcendentibus secundum quod ens dividitur per unum et multa". Cf. *In I Sententiarum*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3 (ed. R. P. Mandonnet, Paris 1929, p. 582): "Et sic accepta, unum et multa sunt de primis differentiis entis, secundum quod ens dividitur in unum et multa, et in actum et in potentiam".

[27] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, IV, q. 2, nn. 77–160 (ed. The Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera philosophica* [= OP], Vol. III, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997, pp. 338–360); n. 77: "Haec quaestio de uno et ente habet tot difficultates".

division has generally been adopted; *unum* signifies "undivided being". The only question that remained in this respect, and which is the first difficulty mentioned by Scotus, was whether the one, although defined by a negation, yet expresses something positive. The most notable argument in support of a positive understanding of the "one" was advanced by Meister Eckhart, who suggests that the negation added by "one" to "being" is a double negation, "the negation of a negation" (see ch. 8.2.3). In his fourth "Metaphysical Disputation", Suárez closes the discussion on the dilemma and defends the dominant negative conception of the transcendental one: *unum* adds the negation of division to being.

Scotus's third difficulty, whether the one that is convertible with being is the principle of number or is transcendental, has its origin in the controversy in Arab philosophy about the status of the one (see ch. 2.4.2). Avicenna's view of the accidentality of the one had been sharply attacked by Averroes. He accuses Avicenna of confusing two distinct kinds of unity, the metaphysical "one" and the mathematical "one", which is the principle of number and an accident. Inspired by Averroes, Thomas Aquinas makes a clear distinction between the transcendental "one" that is convertible with being and the mathematical "one" that belongs to the category of quantity and adds something real to being, namely the property of measure (*mensura*). The "one" that is convertible with being is not identical with the mathematical "one", because nothing that is in a determinate category is consequent upon being in general.[28] Duns Scotus, who was followed by William of Ockham in this respect (see ch. 11.1.3), distances himself from Aquinas's dual conception of unity: one and the same thing does not possess two unities. In every thing the unity that is the principle of number does not really differ from the unity that is convertible with being. The concept of the transcendental unity, however, is always more general, because it is from itself indifferent to what is limited and non-limited, whereas the unity of a determinate genus necessarily implies limitation.[29]

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[28] Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Metaphysicorum*, lect. 2, 557–559 (ed. M.-R. Cathala, pp. 155–156).

[29] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, IV, q. 2, n. 100 (OP III, p. 344): "Quantum ad tertium articulum (…) notandum quod eiusdem non sunt duae unitates (…). Ergo in quocumque est unitas quae est principium numeri, in illo non differt realiter ab ipsa unitate convertibili cum ente. Semper tamen conceptus unitatis transcendentis generalior est, quia ex se indifferens est ad limitatum et non-limitatum;

Among the difficulties listed by Scotus the second one concerning the convertibility of "one" with "being" is of fundamental interest for the metaphysics of the one and deserves particular attention.

2. The authoritative text for the convertibility is, of course, the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*, yet medieval thinkers not only refer to the Philosopher but also to Boethius and Dionysius the Areopagite. The *Summa Halensis* appeals for the convertibility of being and one to *De divinis nominibus*, c. 13, where, in his explanation of the name "One", Dionysius contends that "there is no being that does not participate in the one". When Henry of Ghent in his *Summa* (a. 25, q. 1) deals with the transcendental property "one", he refers to two statements from Boethius about the correlation between one and being; the first is in the commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge*: "all that is therefore is because it is one", the other is in the *Consolation of Philosophy*: "every thing that is remains so long as it retains its unity".[30]

Aristotle adduces two arguments for the convertibility of being and one (see ch. 2.3.2), but they do not in fact provide a properly metaphysical foundation. The first reason is based on linguistic considerations: the expressions "*one* man", "*being* man" and "man" are the same. The addition of the terms "one" and "being" does not express something different from the nature of "man", which shows that "one" is not something other than "being". Aristotle's second argument concludes that the substance of each thing is one and being through itself, not through an accident. Medieval authors felt the need for a more metaphysical consideration of the convertibility.

Albertus Magnus bases the intrinsic connection between being and one on the twofold act of the form (see ch. 5.3.3). The first act is the giving of being, while the second act of the form is the determining of the potentiality of matter with the result that something is undivided, that is, "one". Thomas Aquinas, in his main systematic account of unity in the *Summa theologiae* (I, q. 11, a. 1), presents an argument

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unitas autem determinati generis necessario importat aliquid limitatum, sicut et quidlibet quod est in genere quocumque". Cf. William of Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum* (*Ordinatio)*, d. 24, q. 1 (ed. The Franciscan Institute, in: *Opera Theologica*, Vol. IV, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1979, pp. 72–89).

[30] Henry of Ghent, *Summa quaestionum ordinarium* a. 25, q. 1 (ed. L. Badius, Paris 1520, fol. 147rB): "Dicit enim Boethius super Porphyrium quod 'omne quod est, ideo est quia unum est' et De consolatione 'Omne quod est tamdiu manet et consistit quamdiu unitatem retinet'". For the "Boethian transcendentals", see ch. 2.1.

for the convertibility that is based on the notion of *esse* as act. Starting from the disjunction "every being is either simple or composite", he argues that what is simple is undivided both in act and in potency. What is composed has no being as long as its parts are divided, but does have only being after they come together to constitute the composite. It is therefore obvious that the *esse* of every thing consists in indivision; "that is the reason why everything guards its unity as it guards its *esse*".[31]

Duns Scotus specifies the kind of convertibility between being and one in his critical discussion of Aristotle's statement that "being and the one are the same and one single nature" (see ch. 9.5.1). If the one were essentially the same as being, the consequence would be that what is many is not-being, inasmuch as the many as many is not one. Scotus concludes that there is no "essential" convertibility between being and one, but only a convertibility qua "subject". Being and the one are related to each other as subject and property; the property is convertible with the subject but does not belong to the essence of the subject. Moreover, the one is only convertible with being if the one stands for "one absolutely" (*simpliciter*) or "in a certain respect" (*secundum quid*), under which "multitude" is contained. This disjunction, like the disjunction "potency or act", is convertible with "being", not, however, one of the two disjuncts separately.[32] Scotus's answer to the difficulty aims to reinterpret the idea of the convertibility of the one with being in the direction of his doctrine of the disjunctive transcendentals.

16.4 Metaphysics of the true

A metaphysics of the true has, in contrast to the henology and the metaphysics of the good, no vital roots in the tradition. For the transcendentals "one" and/or "good" the medievals found important leads in Aristotle and Avicenna as well as starting-points in Boethius and Dionysius the Areopagite. With respect to the transcendentality of

[31] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 11, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. IV, p. 107): "Unde manifestum est quod esse cuiuslibet rei consistit in indivisione. Et inde est quod unumquodque, sicut custodit suum esse, ita custodit suam unitatem".

[32] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, IV, q. 2, n. 66 (OP III, p. 335): "Dicendum est ad quaestionem, quod non convertuntur (…), nisi sit unum simpliciter vel secundum quid. Hoc disiunctum convertitur—sicut potentia vel actus—cum ente, non alterum per se".

the true, however, the authoritative sources were reticent. Hence, the introduction of the "true" as a transcendental property of being is one of the original features of Philip the Chancellor's account (see ch. 3.2).

Truth and being

1. In search of a definition that does justice to the transcendental character of the true Philip rejects determinations that include a relation to the intellect, such as the phrase "adequation of thing and intellect" and a definition he attributes to Hilary of Poitiers, "the true is that which declares and manifests being". The true must be defined "without a relation to the intellect" in a purely ontological way. Augustine's definition, "The true is that which is", meets this criterion, but does not express the difference between being and true. Philip holds that, in accordance with the model of the one, the true adds to being the negation of division in the structure of being; the most appropriate definition of truth is "the indivision of being and that which is".

In the disputed questions *De veritate*, Aquinas criticizes this negative determination of truth as well as Augustine's definition, because truth implies a relation: "Every being is called true, insofar as it is conformed or conformable to the intellect; and therefore all who correctly define the true put the intellect in its definition".[33] Three centuries later Suárez, in his *Disputationes metaphysicae*, repeats this criticism of a purely negative definition of truth. Fourteenth-century thinkers like Peter Auriol had maintained that the truth of a thing consists in the "unmixture" (*impermixtio*) with or "segregation" from all that is extrinsic or foreign. This "purity" is meant when we speak of "true gold"—to the present day, for instance in Heidegger's treatise on "The Essence of Truth" (*Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*), the standard example for the ontological truth.[34] But in Suárez's view "according to the

[33] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXII/3, Rome 1976, p. 593): "Unumquodque ens in tantum dicitur verum in quantum est conformatum vel conformabile intellectui; et ideo omnes recte diffinientes verum ponunt in eius definitione intellectum". Cf. R. te Velde, "Die Differenz in der Beziehung zwischen Wahrheit und Sein. Thomas' Kritik am augustinischen Wahrheitsverständnis", in: M. Pickavé (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen*, pp. 179–197.

[34] Peter Auriol, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 19, a. 2 (ed. Rome 1596, 492bD). Cf. M. Heidegger, "Vom Wesen der Wahrheit", in: id., *Wegmarken*, Frankfurt am Main 1967, pp. 73–97 (Engl. Translation by T. Sadler, *The Essence of Truth*, London 2002).

common conception of all who speak about truth the definition or *ratio* of truth somehow includes or connotes the relation to the intellect".[35] Even though, as Suárez's Disputation shows, the nature of this relation was controversially discussed and has been interpreted as a real relation, a thought relation, extrinsic denomination or connotation, the relational character of truth as such is generally accepted.

2. The central thesis of the metaphysics of the true is the convertibility of "being" and "true", but a serious objection to this claim is the heterogenity of what is signified by the two terms: being and true seem to pertain to diverse regions. Truth resides properly in the intellect, is primarily intramental, whereas being is properly in things; for this reason, *verum* cannot be a property convertible with *ens*.[36] Not only reason confirms the heterogenity, but also authority. Aristotle, in book VI of the *Metaphysics* (c. 4), establishes that "truth and falsity are not in things, but in thought" (see ch. 2.3.2). Since the proper place of truth is the mind, the Philosopher concludes that "being true" "must be passed over" by the science of being.

Thomas Aquinas is the thinker who took the Aristotelian conception of truth and the problem of the heterogenity seriously. That already becomes apparent in his train of thought in the first three articles in *De veritate*, q. 1. After having dealt with the question "What is truth?" in art. 1, he argues in art. 2 that truth is principally found in the intellect and not in things. Aquinas actually gives a philosophical justification of Aristotle's statement on the place of truth. A human being relates to reality in two different ways, namely by knowing and by desiring (or willing). Between the processes of knowing and desiring there is a fundamental difference, which becomes evident in their termini, the true and the good. Cognition is a process of "assimilation" that is completed when the similitude of the thing known is in the knower. "True" as the terminus of this process signifies the perfection of knowledge. The appetite, by contrast, is an "inclination" toward a thing in itself. "Good" signifies a perfection in things.[37]

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[35] Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, VIII, sect. 7, n. 18 (ed. C. Berton, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. XXV, Paris 1866, p. 301): "Ratio et definitio veritatis juxta communem modum concipiendi omnium qui de veritate loquuntur, includit vel connotat aliquo modo habitudinem ad intellectum".

[36] For instance, see the objection put forward by Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 2, obj. 1 and *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 16, a. 3, obj. 1.

[37] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, p. 9): "Motus autem cognitivae virtutis terminatur ad animam (…) sed motus appetitivae

Aquinas gives a further specification of the intramental nature of truth in the third art. of *De veritate* q. 1, in which he explains that the primary locus of truth is the intellect that "composes or divides", an act of which the linguistic expression is the proposition. Aquinas's position shows the incorrectness of the idea that in the late Middle Ages, especially in William of Ockham, a turn from an ontological to the "propositional" conception of truth took place.[38]

Although the proper locus of truth is the intellect, Aquinas maintains the transcendental status of the true as "a general mode of being" in the first article of *De veritate*. The true belongs to the relational transcendentals; it conceptually adds the conformity (*convenientia*) to the intellect to being. There is also truth in things, insofar as "a thing is apt to be conformed (*adaequari*) to the intellect according to the degree of its entity (*entitas*)".[39] The true signifies the intelligibility of a thing, which is the foundation of truth in the formal sense, the adequation of thing and intellect.

An innovative aspect of Aquinas's doctrine is his anthropological interpretation of the transcendentality of truth (see ch. 6.1). *Verum* presupposes a correlation between being and the human soul (*anima*). Both relata have a universal extension, the soul no less than being, for the soul is "in a sense all things" (*quodammodo omnia*), namely intentionally through its intellect. A human being distinguishes itself from other beings in the world through its transcendental openness.

3. In his *Metaphysics* commentary, Duns Scotus raises the question prompted by Aristotle's text, "Whether being true (*ens verum*) must be excluded from the consideration of the metaphysician?"[40] Scotus's reply departs from the multiplicity of the term 'true': there is truth in things and truth in the intellect. But truth in things is likewise said in

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terminatur ad res (…); et quia bonum (…) dicit ordinem entis ad appetitum, verum autem dicit ordinem ad intellectum, inde est quod Philosophus dicit in VI Metaphysicae quod bonum et malum sunt in rebus, verum autem et falsum sunt in mente". Cf. *In VI Metaphysicorum*, lect. 4, n. 1234 (ed. M.-R. Cathala, p. 311).

[38] Cf. D. Perler, *Der propositionale Wahrheitsbegriff im 14. Jahrhundert*, Berlin – New York 1992 (Quellen und Studien zur Philosophie, 33). See also the *retractatio* in D. Perler, "Eine sprachphilosophische Wende im Spätmittelalter? Zu den Wahrheitsdiskussionen bei Thomas von Aquin und Wilhelm von Ockham", in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 71 (2004), pp. 280–304.

[39] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 ad 5 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/1, p. 7).

[40] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam* VI, q. 3 (OP IV, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1997, pp. 57–88): "Utrum ens verum debet excludi a consideratione metaphysici".

many ways, since this truth implies a relation to the intellect, which can be twofold. Things are said to be true in relation to a producing (*producens*) intellect or in relation to a merely knowing (*cognoscens*) intellect.[41] Both ways can again be divided into three modes resulting in six different senses of truth in things in sum, which implicitly refer to various conceptions of truth.

Truth in relation to a productive intellect expresses (i) a conformity (*conformitas*) in a general or unqualified sense, which can be specified (ii) as a conformity of adequation (*secundum adaequationem*) or (iii) as a conformity of imitation (*secundum imitationem*). The "conformity of adequation" is found in the Son of God, who is Truth because He is, as Augustine points out (*De vera religione*, c. 43), the highest degree of similarity with His principle, God the Father. This sense of truth represents the trinitarian appropriation of the transcendental true, typical of the Franciscan tradition. Its expression in terms of adequation goes back to Robert Grosseteste, who, in his treatise *De veritate* (composed ca. 1225), introduced the adequation formula and applied it to the second Person of the Trinity, who is the Word (Logos).[42] The "conformity of imitation", on the other hand, is found in the creature, which imitates the divine exemplar because of its partial assimilation to it. This sense of truth expresses the theological foundation of the transcendental true by the divine causality of creation, as presented in the Franciscan *Summa Halensis*. According to Albertus Magnus the transcendental *verum* signifies the relation to the exemplary cause, by which "being" has the feature of "manifestation".[43] But Scotus's view of transcendental truth is different.

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[41] *Ibid.*, n. 23 (p. 65): "Et primo distinguendum est de 'vero'. Est enim veritas in rebus et veritas in intellectu. In rebus duplex in genere, videlicet per comparationem ad producentem et per comparationem ad cognoscentem sive intelligentem".

[42] *Ibid.*, n. 24–25 (pp. 65–66). Cf. Robert Grosseteste, *De veritate* (ed. L. Bauer, in: *Die philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln*, Münster 1912 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, 9), pp. 130–143, in particular p. 134): "Et hoc est, quod aliqui dicunt veritatem esse 'adaequationem sermonis et rei' et 'adaequationem rei ad intellectum' (…). Sapientia autem et verbum, sive 'Sermo Patris' maxime adaequatur hoc modo adaequationis rei, quam dicit et loquitur (…). Ipse igitur Sermo Patris secundum hanc definitionem veritatis maxime veritas est".

[43] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, VI, q. 3, n. 25 (OP IV, p. 66): "Tertius modus invenitur in creatura quae imitatur exemplar cui aliquo modo assimilatur; defective tamen, alias non diceretur imitari". Albert the Great, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 46, a. 13 (ed. A. Borgnet, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. 26, Paris 1893, 448b).

A thing is again said to be true in relation to a knowing intellect in three ways: (i) because it is able to manifest itself (*sui manifestativa*) to every intellect capable of perceiving it, or (ii) because it is able to assimilate (*assimilativa*) the intellect to it, or (iii) because it is in the intellect, as what is known is in the knower.[44] The first sense signifies the intelligibility of being, the second sense implies a relation to an intellect that is somehow passive, that is, to the created intellect, and the third sense, Scotus observes, is "logical being" (*ens logicum*).

The differences between the six modes of truth are such that Scotus concludes to the equivocity of the phrase "truth in a thing".[45] He wonders which of the six modes of *verum reale* properly pertain to the consideration of metaphysics. In any case all three modes of truth taken in relation to a productive intellect belong to the study of this science, because they do not contract being to quantity or to motion. From the three modes of truth in relation to a knowing intellect only the first mode pertains to metaphysics. This mode of truth in the sense of "self-manifestation" is also the only one that is convertible with being.[46] Scotus emphasizes that this openness for an intellect is not dependent on an operation of an intellect, but is an intrinsic aptitude of being. Even if no intellect existed, every thing would be able to manifest itself according to its grade of being.[47]

Scotus's conclusion concerning the sense of "true" that is convertible with "being" is representative of the medieval metaphysics of the true. It understands the transcendental true as the openness or "manifestation of being" to the intellect. The definition attributed to Hilary of Poitiers, "the true is that which declares or manifests being", which Philip the Chancellor had introduced (and rejected) in the first account of transcendental concepts, appears to be the most adequate *ratio* in this respect.

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[44] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*, VI, q. 3, n. 26 (OP IV, p. 66): "Secundo modo, scilicet per comparationem ad intellectum, dicitur res vera tripliciter. Primo, quia sui manifestativa—quantum est de se—cuicumque intellectui potenti manifestationem cognoscere. Secundo, quia est assimilativa intellectus assimilabilis, qui non est nisi intellectus creatus. Tertio, quia facta manifestatione vel assimilatione, res est in intellectu sicut cognitum in cognoscente".

[45] *Ibid.*, n. 27 (p. 66): "Pro istis sex conceptibus exprimendis potest accipi aequivoce 'veritas in re'".

[46] *Ibid.*, n. 71 (p. 83): "Secundum autem, scilicet sumptum per comparationem ad cognoscentem, primum membrum pertinet, quatenus convertitur cum ente".

[47] *Ibid.*, n. 28 (p. 66): "Quia si nullus esset intellectus, adhuc quaelibet res secundum gradum suae entitatis esset nata se manifestare".

"Verum et factum convertuntur" (*Vico*)

Truth concerns the relation between knowing and being and implies a view of man's attitude toward reality. It is just in reflections on "truth" that the complex process of the transformation of the medieval doctrine of the transcendentals to modern transcendental philosophy becomes apparent. An interesting link in this historical development is the thesis: "The true and what is made are convertible" of an eighteenth-century thinker, Giambattista Vico (1668–1744).[48]

His *Liber metaphysicus*, which appeared in 1710, starts with this thesis: "For the Latins, *verum* and *factum* reciprocate, or in the language of the Schools, are convertible".[49] The term "convertible" suggests continuity with the medieval doctrine of the transcendentals, and this impression is reinforced by Vico's reference to the "Scholastic" terminology. In fact, however, his thesis expresses distance from the transcendental-ontological tradition, because for the medievals *being* and the true are convertible. The term that needs clarification is *factum*; it certainly does not mean "fact"—with his thesis Vico does not intend a naïve theory of correspondence. The *factum* of the thesis must really be understood as the past participle of the verb *facere* ("to make"). This becomes clear from other formulations of the basic axiom in his work. So Vico designates, as we shall see, "to have made" (*fecisse*) as the criterion of the true (*veri criterium*). And in the conclusion of his *Metaphysics* he formulates the thesis as the identity of the verbs *verare* and *facere*.[50]

In the second chapter Vico applies his basic thesis to the truth of the sciences. The convertibility of "true" and "what is made" functions as a transcendental measure for the possibilities and limits of human scientific knowledge. Man cannot attain truth in his investigation of the nature of things, since he does not contain within himself the elements by virtue of which natural things exist. God alone knows the physical

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[48] V. Rüfner, "Ens et verum convertuntur, Factum et verum convertuntur. Zur Problematik mittelalterlicher und neuzeitlicher Ontologie", in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 60 (1950), pp. 406–437. K. Löwith, *Vico's Grundsatz: verum et factum convertuntur. Seine theologische Prämisse und deren säkulare Konsequenzen*, Heidelberg 1968.

[49] Giambattista Vico, *Liber metaphysicus*, I, c. 1 (ed. [with a German translation] S. Otto / H. Viechtbauer, Munich 1979, p. 34): "Latinis 'verum' et 'factum' reciprocantur, seu, ut Scholarum vulgus loquitur, convertuntur". Cf. *Vico. Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. by L. Pompa, Cambridge 1982.

[50] Giambattista Vico, *Liber metaphysicus*, Conclusio (ed. S. Otto / H. Viechtbauer, p. 148): "Etenim habes verare et facere idem esse".

world, because he created it from nothing. Only in the mathematical sciences is truth accessible to man, for man does not find the elements of mathematical things outside of himself, but constructs them himself. The most certain sciences are those which resemble divine science in their operation, insofar as in them the true is convertible with what is made. By way of summary it is Vico's conclusion that "the criterion and rule of the true is to have made it".[51]

In his survey of the different senses of truth in things, Duns Scotus had distinguished between truth in relation to a productive intellect and truth in relation to a knowing intellect. The true that is convertible with being concerns one of the modes of the latter relation and signifies the openness of things for the intellect, the manifestation or intelligibility of being. Vico's thesis expresses another model of truth; the focus is shifted to truth in relation to a *productive* intellect; moreover, there is a reassessment of the role of man's practical reason. The *human* productive intellect is the criterion of what is true. The dignity of a spiritual being no longer consists in its transcendental openness but in its ability to construct reality.

In the *Liber metaphysicus*, Vico demonstrates his basic thesis of the convertibility of the true and what-is-made with respect to mathematics; the application to the mathematical world was not an original idea but already made by Nicholas of Cusa (*De coniecturis* I, c. 1, n. 5). In a later work, the "New Science" (*Scienza nuova*), Vico extends his thesis to the understanding of human culture. "The civil world itself has certainly been made by men, and its principles therefore can (…) be rediscovered within the modifications of our own human mind".[52] One could say that in Kant's transcendental philosophy Vico's thesis is also extended to the consideration of nature.[53] In the preface to his *Critique of Pure Reason* (B XIII), he writes that Galileo and others

[51] *Ibid.*, I, 2 (p. 44): "Cum igitur scientia humana nata sit ex mentis nostrae vicio, nempe summa eius brevitate, qua extra res omnes est, et qua quae noscere affectat non continet, et quia non continet, vera quae studet non operatur; eae certissimae sunt, quae originis vicium luunt, et operatione scientiae divinae similes evadunt, utpote in quibus verum et factum convertantur. Atque ex his, quae sunt hactenus dissertata, omnino colligere licet, veri criterium ac regulam ipsum esse fecisse". Cf. S. Otto, "Die transzendentalphilosophische Relevanz des Axioms 'verum et factum convertuntur'. Überlegungen zu Giambattista Vico's 'Liber metaphysicus'", in: id., *Materialien zur Theorie der Geistesgeschichte*, Munich 1979 (Geistesgeschichte und ihre Methode, 2), pp. 174–196.

[52] Giambattista Vico, *Scienza nuova*, § 331 (transl. L. Pompa).

[53] Cf. K. Löwith, *Vico's Grundsatz: verum et factum convertuntur*, p. 26.

saw "that reason has insight only into what it produces according to its own design". The human subject constitutes the objects of experience through its *a priori* forms. In Kant's conception the relation of the *a priori* knowledge to the object constitutes not only the object as such but also the "transcendental truth", which is the condition of the possibility of every empirical truth.[54]

Priority of the true?

"True" is a transcendental property of being and presupposes as property the priority of "being". But this precedence in the order of the transcendentals has occasionally been challenged from the perspective of the "true". The priority of the true seems to be a consequence of its transcendentality, signifying the intelligibility of being. Everything is known under the *ratio* of the true and cannot be understood without the true. Since intelligibility is the prerequisite condition of human intellectual cognition, the true must precede being. This claim suggests a certain continuity with modern transcendental philosophy, in which being always is known being.

Aquinas was the first to discuss the priority of the true as an objection to its convertibility with being, but he rejects the idea. It is correct to say that "being" cannot be understood without the "true", for the true cannot be separated from being. However, this does not mean that "being" cannot be understood without the "true" being understood. It is not by understanding "being" that the *ratio* of the true is understood. Aquinas explains this with a comparison between "being" and "intelligible". It is only because being is intelligible that it can be understood. But being can be understood without the aspect of intelligibility itself being understood. What is first known is "being", not the "intelligible" or the "true".[55]

A distinctive feature of Henry of Ghent's account of the transcendentals is the special position he attributes to the "true", because it possesses a certain priority to "being" (see ch. 7.1.1). Henry distinguishes between an "objectively" first concept and a "dispositively" first concept. "Being" is *obiective* the first concept of the intellect, although it is only conceived under the aspect of "true". The *ratio* of "true" is the

[54] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B 185.

[55] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 16, a. 3 ad 3; *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 ad 3; *In I Sententiarum*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 ad 2.

first *dispositive* ("in the manner of a disposition"), the necessary condition of any objective knowledge. In this sense the concept of "true", signifying the aspect of intelligibility, "goes around (*circuit*) the totality of being".

Henry's view of the priority of the true had some influence. Its effect becomes apparent from the discussions on the "first adequate object" of the intellect, inaugurated by Duns Scotus. One of the positions he discusses holds that "the transcendental true" is this object (see ch. 9.4.3), and some of the arguments advanced in support of this position refer to the priority of the true in Henry's account. Scotus, however, rejects the idea that the true under the aspect of true is the first adequate object of the intellect. Not every thing that is known is known under the aspect of true, for the intellect is able to understand the "good" according to its proper *ratio* of the "good" as distinct from the "true".

Peter Thomae, who wants to "scoticize" in his work, nonetheless criticizes his Master's rejection (see ch. 10.3). Scotus has insufficiently distinguished between the *obiectum quod* and the *obiectum quo* of a potency, that is, between the object *that* a potency conceives and the aspect *under which* it conceives its object. The distinction is similar to that of Henry of Ghent between what is *obiective* first and what is *dispositive* first. "Being" is the first *obiectum quod* of the intellect, but "truth" is the formal *ratio* by which this object is understood. Thomae's reflections are further acknowledgement that the transcendental true possesses some kind of priority within the doctrine of the transcendentals.

16.5 Metaphysics of the good

From Philip the Chancellor's *Summa de bono* to Suárez's *Metaphysical Disputations* transcendental metaphysics includes a metaphysics of the good or an agathology.[56] It examines what the good is, the *ratio* of the

[56] Cf. S. MacDonald, *The Metaphysics of Goodness in Medieval Philosophy before Aquinas*, Cornell University 1986 [Doctoral Thesis]. W. Goris (ed.), *Die Metaphysik und das Gute. Aufsätze zu ihrem Verhältnis in Antike und Mittelalter, Jan A. Aertsen zu Ehren*, Leuven 1999 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales. Bibliotheca, 2). J. A. Aertsen, "Filosofia Cristiana: Primacia del ser versus primacia del bien?", in: *Anuario Filosofico* 33 (2000), pp. 339–361. J. Uscatescu Barrón, *Der Begriff des Guten in der mittelalterlichen Philosophie von Avicenna bis Suárez: Eine Untersuchung*

good, and accounts for the convertibility of "being" and "good". The medieval agathology offers an alternative for the Platonic metaphysical-ethical conception of philosophy. Plato conceived an agathology that at the same time was a philosophy of the transcendent: he designated the absolute transcendence of the Idea of the Good with the expression "beyond being" (see ch. 1.3). Fundamental for the medieval metaphysics of the good, by contrast, is the transcendental conception of the good, which had been suggested by Aristotle's criticism of Plato's Idea of the Good in his *Ethics*. He rejects the existence of such an Idea, since the good, just as being, is found in all categories. Aristotle's critique emphasizes the categorial diversity of the good, but was read by medieval commentators as an indication of the transcendental commonness of the good.

The metaphysics of the good is the driving force behind the rise of the doctrine of the transcendentals. In chapter III we made plausible that the first systematic account of these notions is found in the *Summa de bono* (ca. 1225) of Philip the Chancellor. The *Summa* is a true metaphysics of the good, successively dealing with the good of nature, the moral good and the good of grace, but starting with eleven introductory questions on the commonness of the good. The focus on the good has a historic-religious motive; the basic question of metaphysics for Philip is not the Heideggerian question as to why there is being and not rather nothing, but is concerned with the goodness of being. In reaction to the ontological dualism of good and evil taught by "the Manichees" he wants to establish that the good belongs to the *communissima* and is coextensive with being. The true character of evil as a lack or privation can only be seen from the perspective of the goodness of reality.

"Good" is a common point of reference for metaphysics and ethics, but is considered by these sciences in different manners. Metaphysics considers the good theoretically, that is, under the aspect of true (*ut verum*), practical science, however, considers the true *as good*, that is, as something to be done.[57] One of the most interesting aspects of the

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[57] Cf. the distinctions made by Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, I, n. 2 (ed. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Vol. I, Quaracchi 1924, p. 5): "Est enim verum ut verum, et est verum ut bonum (…). In aliis vero scientiis, speculativis scilicet, est acceptio veri ut veri et etiam boni ut veri; in practicis autem moralibus, etsi sit acceptio veri ut boni, non tamen ut boni gratuiti, sed moralis".

medieval metaphysics of the good is the relation Aquinas establishes between transcendentality and morality. He gives a transcendental foundation to the first principle of practical reason, "The good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided". The principle is founded on the first concept of practical reason, "the good". The good, which is the last in the order of the transcendentals, is the first in the practical domain (see ch. 6.3.2).

One of the tasks of a metaphysics of the good is to examine the nature of the good and to determine its *ratio*. Medieval thinkers have put forward a variety of determinations, which display the various aspects of the good. Informative is the survey given by the Carmelite master Gerard of Bologna in a *Quodlibet* at the beginning of the fourteenth century.[58] This text is also instructive in another respect, because Gerard's discussion shows the trouble into which the metaphysics of the good gets: is really every being good?

The ratio *of the good*

1. Gerard of Bologna lists six opinions on the *ratio boni*: the essence of the "good" is supposed to be "the end" (*finis*), "what is perfect" (*perfectum*), "what is diffusive" (*diffusivum*) or "communicative" (*communicativum*), "what is suitable" (*conveniens*), "the one" (*unum*) and "the desirable" (*appetibile*).[59] Gerard's survey is by no means complete; he does not mention, for instance, Philip the Chancellor's description of the good as "the indivision of act from potency".

The six opinions listed by Gerard originate from the two dominant philosophies of the good, the Neoplatonic and the Aristotelian tradition of thought. The determination of the *ratio boni* as "the one" has its origins in the Neoplatonic conception of the good. Gerard refers to Proclus, who, in his *Elementatio theologica*, prop. 13, maintains the unifying character of the good: "Every good tends to unify what participates in it; and all unification is a good; and the Good is identical with the One". It belongs to the good to conserve all that exists, but likewise that which keeps each thing together is unity.[60] The medievals

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[58] S. F. Brown, "Gerard of Bologna on the Nature of the Good", in: M. Pickavé, *Die Logik des Transzendentalen*, pp. 285–303 (with an edition of *Quodlibet* I, q. 2).

[59] Gerard of Bologna, *Quodlibet* I, q. 2, a. 1 (ed. Brown, pp. 293–294).

[60] Proclus, *Elementatio theologica translata a Guillelmo de Morbecca*, prop. 13 (ed. H. Boese, Leuven 1987 (Ancient and medieval philosophy. De Wulf-Mansion Centre,

could also read the identity of the good and the one in Boethius (see ch. 2.1). In the third book of the *Consolation of Philosophy* (prosa 11), he argues, in accordance with Proclus's proposition, that the one and the good are the same on the basis of the principle that "things are of the same essence, if their effects, according to their nature, are not different". A political interpretation of the "good" understood as the "one" was provided by Dante in his work *Monarchia*. One of his arguments for the claim that "the monarchy is necessary for the well-being (*bene esse*) of the world" is based on the idea that the one is "the root (*radix*) of being good".[61]

Another *ratio boni* that has its origin in the Neoplatonic tradition is the conception of the good as "diffusive" or "communicative". Gerard of Bologna does not make a reference to an authority, but already Philip the Chancellor attributes the description "the good is multiplicative or diffusive of being" to (pseudo-)Dionysius the Areopagite. This determination is, as Philip indicates, not found verbatim in Dionysius's work, but the phrase conveniently expresses a central element of his doctrine of the good in *De divinis nominibus*. The Dionysian *ratio* is focused on the "productivity" of the good: the good diffuses itself just because of its goodness.

The other four determinations of "the good" mentioned by Gerard of Bologna are not foreign to the Neoplatonic tradition, but are primarily derived from the Aristotelian account, which is focused on the "attractivity" of the good. The key concept is "what is desirable" (*appetibile*), which was intimated by Aristotle at the beginning of his *Ethics* (1094a 3): "The good has rightly been declared to be 'that which all things desire' ". Medieval commentators, like Aquinas (*In I Ethicorum*, lect. 1), interpreted this description in a transcendental sense; the phrase does not mean a specific good, but defines the good "commonly taken" (*communiter sumptum*). In his accounts of the transcendentals in *De veritate*, Aquinas regards *appetibile* as the *ratio* of the transcendental good. "Good" belongs to the relational transcendentals and adds "the conformity (*convenientia*) to the appetite" to "being". Just as the true

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Series 1, V), p. 10): "Omne bonum unitivum est participantium ipso, et omnis unitio bonum, et bonum uni idem".

[61] Dante, *Monarchia*, I, 15 (ed. R. Imbach / C. Flüeler, Stuttgart 1989, p. 108). Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 103, a. 3 ["Whether the world is governed by the one"] (ed. Commissio Leonina, in: *Opera omnia*, Vol. V, Rome 1889, p. 455): "(…) Unitas autem pertinet ad rationem bonitatis, ut Boetius probat".

is the formal object of the intellect, the good is the object of the other universal faculty of a human being, the will.

"Good" and "end" (*finis*) have the same *ratio*—a view expressed by Aristotle in a number of places in his *Metaphysics*. This identification follows from the determination of the good as "what is desirable", since what is desirable has the character of an end and the causal influence proper to the end is to be desired. Goodness and end are convertible, Meister Eckhart asserts.[62] The *ratio* of the good is likewise "what is perfect" (*perfectum*). "Perfect" is what lacks nothing; it has the character of "complete", since it is that which has attained its end. "Perfect" is defined by Aristotle (*Physics* III, c. 6, 207a 9) as "that which has nothing outside itself".

Some fourteenth-century authors, like Peter Auriol, argue that "good" must be understood as something relative and hold that the *ratio boni* is "what is suitable" (*conveniens*). The good is the object of the appetite, but something is only desirable insofar as it is suitable to a thing. In his Disputation on the transcendental good, Suárez also concludes that the good adds the aspect of suitability (*convenientia*) to being.[63]

2. The good is "one", "diffusive" or communicative", "desirable", "end", "perfect" and "suitable". Which among these six determinations is "more probable?", Gerard asks. For an answer to this question one needs a selection criterion, and Gerard provides this: What does not belong to every being cannot be the *ratio* of the good, because the good is said to be coextensive with being.[64] Gerard's discussion takes

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[62] Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, III, c. 2, 996b 13. Thomas Aquinas, *In II Metaphysicorum*, lect. 4, n. 317 (ed. M.-R. Cathala, p. 89): "Remota autem causa finali, removetur natura et ratio boni: eadem enim ratio boni et finis est; nam bonum est quod omnia appetunt"; *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 4; *De veritate*, q. 22, a. 2 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XXII/3, p. 616): "Sicut autem influere causae efficientis est agere, ita influere causae finalis est appeti et desiderari". Meister Eckhart, *In Genesim I*, n. 128 (LW III, p. 282): "Primo quod bonitas et eius ratio totaliter et tota consistit in fine solo et est idem cum fine ipso convertibiliter".

[63] Peter Auriol, *In II Sententiarum*, d. 35, q. unica, a. 1 (ed. Rome 1605, pp. 294–296): "Utrum ratio boni et convenientis sit una et eadem ratio". Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, X, sect. 1, n. 12. Cf. R. Darge, "*Omne ens est conveniens*. Ursprung und Entwicklung eines spätmittelalterlichen Neuansatzes der Theorie des ontischen Gutseins", in: *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 50 (2005), pp. 9–27.

[64] Gerard of Bologna, *Quodlibet* I, q. 2, a. 2 (ed. Brown, p. 294): "Secundo considerandum quid inter haec omnia videatur probabilius esse. Et circa hoc intelligendum quod cum bonum dicatur aequaliter enti, ut dicitur I *Metaphysica* (*leg.: Ethica*

an interesting turn by his claim that an adequate definition must consider the transcendentality of the good.

Gerard goes through the six accounts of the good and establishes that most of them do not meet the criterion that the good is coextensive with being. The *ratio* of the good cannot be the end (*finis*), for the nature of an end does not belong to every being. This is apparent from Aristotle's division of the good (in book VIII of the *Ethics*) into the useful (*utile*), the pleasant (*delectabile*) and the befitting (*honestum*), and his determination of the useful as means to an end, not the end itself. Nor is the *ratio* of the good "what is perfect", because not every being is perfect, as prime matter illustrates. Nor is the essence of the good identical with "communicative", since not every being communicates itself, nor with "suitable" (*conveniens*), since suitability expresses a relation and is thus not coextensive with being. The view that the *ratio* of the good is "the one" is not true, but for a reason different to the coextensive criterion: the "one" expresses a negation ("what is undivided"), whereas the "good" signifies something positive. For Gerard, the opinion that the *ratio* of the good is "what is desirable" (*appetibile*) "comes closer to the truth". The other five determinations can be reduced as partial accounts of the good to "desirable" as the total and adequate *ratio*. Every being desires its end, desires to be perfect, desires to communicate itself, desires what fits it, and desires its unity.[65]

But Gerard recognizes that the account of the good in terms of "desirable" has no less difficulty than the other five (partial) determinations. If the partial definitions can be legitimately criticized, then the total and adequate determination of the good is just as vulnerable to criticism. Since the *ratio* of "desirable" seems to be identical with the *ratio* of "end", "perfect" and "diffusive", and since it is proven that these determinations are not identical with the *ratio* of "good", the non-identity is proven *per consequens* with respect to "desirable".[66]

An even more serious difficulty concerns the argument on the basis of which the inadequacy of the *rationes* of the good was established, namely that they do not have the same extension as being. Gerard observes that this criterion does not seem to be "effective" (*efficax*),

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Nicomachea, c. 4), impossibile est illud esse rationem boni quod non omni enti convenire potest".

[65] *Ibid.* (pp. 294–296).

[66] *Ibid.* (pp. 296–297).

for Aristotle, in the third book of his *Metaphysics*, claims that mathematical objects do not possess goodness. Yet mathematical objects are "beings", since Aristotle considers mathematics to be a real science. It seems, therefore, that the good is not coextensive with being.[67] Gerard's discussion of the good gets into trouble, since its presupposition seems questionable: is every being good?

Is every being good?

1. The thesis "every being is good" (*omne ens est bonum*) has been harshly criticized by modern philosophers who separate ontology from axiology and draw a sharp distinction between being and value. According to the German philosopher Max Scheler "this proposition is wrong if 'bonum' means more than valuable. For the 'omne ens' is, qua ens, indifferent to good and bad".[68]

However, the thesis of the convertibility of being and good has not only been criticized in modern philosophy, but Gerard of Bologna's *Quodlibet* shows that the thesis also caused problems in medieval thought. He puts forward the objection that was raised again and again to the convertibility, namely the absence of goodness in mathematical objects; the argument was advanced by Thomas Aquinas, Meister Eckhart and Suárez.[69] At first glance, it seems odd that the standard objection to the goodness of reality concerns mathematical objects. Why is the absence of goodness in these objects a metaphysically weighty counterargument?

The argument is derived from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In the third book, the book of the *aporiae*, he examines the question as to whether the consideration of all kinds of causes (formal, material, efficient and final) belongs to one and the same science or to several sciences. Aristotle suggests that the first part of the alternative is impossible, since

[67] *Ibid.* (p. 297): "Ratio insuper per quam arguitur illa non dicere omnino rationem boni, quia videlicet non adaequatur enti, non videtur efficax esse, nam, III *Metaphysicae*, dicitur quod in mathematicis non est bonum, sed constat mathematica esse entia, cum de eis sit scientia realis, ut dicitur VI *Metaphysicae*. Non ergo videtur quod bonum aequatur enti".

[68] M. Scheler, *Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge*, London 1980, p. 217, n. 141. Cf. J. Hirschberger, "'Omne ens est bonum'", in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 53 (1940), pp. 292–305.

[69] Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 2, obj. 4; *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 3, obj. 4. Cf. Meister Eckhart, *In Iohannem*, n. 514; *Quaestiones Parisienses*, I, n. 7. Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, X, sect. 3, nn. 20–23.

not all kinds of causes can be found in many things. He gives the example of the final cause, which has the nature of the good. The end and the final cause are connected with movement and are therefore not found in unchangeable things. Aristotle sees a confirmation of this conclusion in the science of mathematics, which abstracts from motion. In mathematics nothing is demonstrated by the final cause and there is no account of good and evil.[70]

The presupposition in Aristotle's exposition is the identification of goodness with natural finality. It is this aspect that makes the absence of goodness in mathematical objects metaphysically weighty; the good only extends to a region of being. Meister Eckhart explicitly draws this conclusion: the good belongs to the domain of nature or physics. He is of the opinion that if there is no good in mathematical objects, as Aristotle asserts, this holds *a fortiori* for metaphysics and the divine. "The metaphysician who considers the entity of things proves nothing through extrinsic causes (…), but rather looks only to the formal cause, the ideal reason".[71] In such a metaphysical conception, the notion of "good" must lose its relevance, because good is related to what is extrinsic and to the final cause. In this respect, Eckhart's metaphysics resembles the modern world picture, which has eliminated any reference to the idea of final causality.

2. After having presented the objection that there is no goodness in mathematical objects, Gerard of Bologna makes in his *Quodlibet* a new attempt at an explanation of the transcendentality of the good. It consists in an analysis, not of the various *rationes* of the essence of the good but of the "multiplicity" of the term: "the good is said in many ways" (*bonum multipliciter dicitur*). The first sense of the good is the most common (*communissime*) qua extension: it encompasses or goes around (*circuit*) all beings and every mode of being. The second sense of good is more limited, namely the end and terminus of all actions related to motion. Aristotle refers to the good in this sense when he, in the book III of his *Metaphysics*, concludes that the good is not found in unchangeable things. The third sense of good means the end of unchangeable things—Gerard's description is rather vague; later in the

[70] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, III, c. 2, 996a 20–b 1.

[71] Meister Eckhart, *In Genesim I*, n. 4 (LW I, pp. 187–188). Cf. *In Iohannem*, n. 336 (LW III, p. 284): "Si enim 'in mathematicis non est bonum' et finis, sed solum causa formalis, ut ait philosophus, quanto magis in metaphysicis et divinis".

text this good is signified as the first, divine good. The fourth sense of good means the end of human actions; it is the kind of good that is pursued in ethics and politics.[72]

Gerard distinguishes four senses of "good", which can be designated as the common or "metaphysical" good, the "natural" good, the "divine" good and the "moral" good, respectively. He then examines which of these senses are convertible with "being". It is evident that the fourth sense, the moral good, and the second sense, the natural good, do not have the same extension as being. Yet the descriptions of the good in terms of "perfect", "communicative", "suitable", and "desirable" are applicable to these limited senses of good. The third sense of the term, the "divine" good, is coextensive with being, not in the way that it can be predicated of all beings but rather in the sense that by its perfection it is the end of all beings. An illustration of this usage could be Thomas Aquinas, who calls God "the common good" (*bonum commune*) to which every particular good is ordered as an end.[73] The good in the first sense really is convertible with being, because it is predicated of all beings. But Gerard must confess that it is unclear what the *ratio* of the good is in the most common sense.[74] His second attempt at an explanation of the convertibility of good and being again ends in embarassment. The *rationes* of the good, distinguished in the first part of the *Quodlibet*, can be applied to the moral good and the natural good. However, the reason for the goodness of reality in the metaphysical sense remains unclear.

3. Medieval arguments establish the goodness of being in two different ways. One approach consists in a theological-metaphysical reduction of things to the first cause, an origin which is called "creation" and is philosophically interpreted as "participation" in what is good by its essence. Albertus Magnus is a representative of this approach, since he opposes the *philosophus* to the *sancti* in a discussion of the transcendental notions (see ch. 5.2). The Philosopher recognized the

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[72] Gerard of Bologna, *Quodlibet* I, q. 2, a. 2 (ed. Brown, pp. 297–299).

[73] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, III, c. 17(ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. XIV, p. 40): "Bonum particulare ordinatur in bonum commune sicut in finem (…). Bonum autem summum, quod est Deus, est bonum commune".

[74] Gerard of Bologna, *Quodlibet* I, q. 2, a. 3 (ed. Brown, p. 300): "Et forte istis duobus modis [*sc.* secundo et quarto] adaptantur rationes perfectivi, perfecti, communicativi, et fortassis etiam convenientis et appetibilis (…). Sed quid sit ratio boni primo modo dicti non clare apparet".

transcendental character of "being" and "one", but did not hold that "true" and "good" are "general dispositions concomitant with being". Aristotle considered the good insofar as it is the end of motion, that is, as something belonging to the domain of physics. The "saints", on the other hand, considered being insofar as it has "flowed" from the first, true and good being. Albert has Christian-Neoplatonic thinkers in mind that held that "good" is in every being, for the good diffuses itself; and what proceeds from the first good can only be good. The universal causality of the first principle has also the aspect of a final cause—the idea of finality is thus extended to the meta-physical domain. Albert determines the connection between "good" and "being" from the perspective of the ultimate end: "good" signifies "the relation to the extrinsic end, from and toward which a thing is".[75]

Another account of the goodness of being is based on the inner structure of being. A typical example is Thomas Aquinas, one of the few medieval thinkers who, in the *Summa theologiae*, explicitly discusses the convertibility of being and good. His argument starts with the *ratio* of the good as what is "desirable" (*appetibile*). The next steps in the argument identify "desirable" with "perfect"—a thing is desirable only insofar as it is perfect—, and "perfect" with what is "in act"—a thing is not perfect until it has attained its proper act; only then is the thing what it can and must be. By means of the notion of "act" Aquinas is able to establish the intrinsic connection between good and being, "for to be (*esse*) is the actuality (*actualitas*) of every thing". With this final step the analysis has arrived at the conclusion that good and being are really identical.[76] The good does not come to a thing from the outside, but pertains to what is most intimate to it, its being.

Aquinas's understanding of being (*esse*) as "actuality" is crucial in his argument. "Being" is not a good alongside other perfections like "life" and "knowledge". The latter perfections are desirable only

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[75] Albert the Great, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 46, a. 14 (ed. Borgnet, Vol. 26, p. 450): "Bonitas autem et bonum dicunt respectum ad finem extra, a quo res est, et ad quem est".

[76] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 1 (ed. Commissio Leonina, Vol. IV, p. 56): "Ratio enim boni in hoc consistit, quod aliquid sit appetibile: unde Philosophus, in I *Ethic.*, dicit quod bonum est 'quod omnia appetunt'. Manifestum est autem quod unumquodque est appetibile secundum quod est perfectum: nam omia appetunt suam perfectionem. Intantum est autem perfectum unumquodque, inquantum est actu: unde manifestum est quod intantum est aliquid bonum, inquantum est ens: esse enim est actualitas omnis rei (…). Unde manifestum est quod bonum et ens sunt idem secundum rem".

insofar as they are in act. Nothing has actuality insofar as it is. Hence in each of the other perfections "some being" is desired. "And thus nothing is desirable except being (*ens*), and consequently nothing is good except being".[77]

Aquinas's account of the goodness of being is one of the most interesting philosophical arguments in the Scholastic tradition. But because it is bound to the *ratio* of "being" as "actuality", his argument lost its force, when another ontology became dominant since Henry of Ghent, in which "being" is synonymous with quidditative being. When "being" is understood as a real quiddity, there is no qualitative difference between "being" and perfections like "life" and "knowledge", but only a difference in extension, insofar as "being" is more universal.

[77] *Ibid.*, a. 2 ad 4 (p. 58): "vita et scientia, et alia huiusmodi, sic appetuntur ut sunt in actu: unde in omnibus appetitur quoddam esse. Et sic nihil est appetibile nisi ens: et per consequens nihil est bonum nisi ens".

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